

STATEMENT

I, Masanori HAYASHI, hereby state that I am competent in both the Japanese and English languages and that the attached English language document is an accurate translation of Japanese Patent Application No.2002-319169.

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[Name of Document] Specification

[Title of the Invention] Biodegradable substrate, prosthetic material for tissue regeneration, and cultured tissue [Scope of Claims]

[Claim 1] A biodegradable substrate, which comprises a biodegradable nonwoven fabric that is stitched with a biodegradable thread.

[Claim 2] A biodegradable substrate, which comprises a biodegradable nonwoven fabric and a biodegradable filmy material that are piled up on one another and stitched with a biodegradable thread.

[Claim 3] The biodegradable substrate according to claim 2, wherein the biodegradable filmy material is in the form of a film or a sponge.

[Claim 4] The biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the biodegradable nonwoven fabric comprises a laminated product including a first layer and a second layer, each of which has a plurality of biodegradable threads arranged in parallel, the first layer and the second layer being piled up on one another such that an arranging direction of the threads of the first layer and an arranging direction of the threads of the second layer are at an angle with respect to each other, and adhered to each other.

[Claim 5] The biodegradable substrate according to claim 4, wherein the laminated product further includes a third layer having a plurality of biodegradable threads arranged in parallel on the first

layer or the second layer, where an arranging direction of the threads of the third layer and an arranging direction of the threads of the layer adjacent to the third layer are at an angle with respect to each other, and the third layer and its adjacent layer are adhered to each other.

[Claim 6] The biodegradable substrate according to claim 4 or 5, wherein an acute angle between the arranging direction of the threads of the first layer and the arranging direction of the thread of the second layer, and/or an acute angle between an arranging direction of the threads of the third layer and an arranging direction of the threads of the layer adjacent to the third layer are/is about 20° or less.

[Claim 7] The biodegradable substrate according to claim 4 or 5, wherein an acute angle between the arranging direction of the threads of the first layer and the arranging direction of the thread of the second layer, and/or an acute angle between an arranging direction of the threads of the third layer and an arranging direction of the threads of the layer adjacent to the third layer are/is about 70° to 90°.

[Claim 8] The biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 4 to 7, wherein the biodegradable nonwoven fabric comprises a plurality of the laminated products, each of which contains a plurality of layers having threads arranged therein and piled up on one another, and the laminated products are piled up on one another

and adhered to each other such that arranging directions of the threads of the layers adjacent to each other at an interface between the laminated products are at an angle with respect to each other.

[Claim 9] The biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 4 to 8, wherein the threads arranged on a respective layer have an acute angle of about 0 to 5° therebetween.

[Claim 10] The biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 4 to 9, wherein the threads in each layer are arranged at intervals of about 0 to 40 mm.

[Claim 11] The biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 1 to 10, characterized in that stitches are made in a dotted pattern.

[Claim 12] The biodegradable substrate according to claim 11, wherein the stitches are made at intervals of about 0.1 mm to 100 mm.

[Claim 13] The biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the surface of the biodegradable nonwoven fabric and/or the surface of the biodegradable thread are/is coated with a biodegradable material.

[Claim 14] The biodegradable substrate according to claim 13, wherein the biodegradable material is comprised of one or more materials selected from the group consisting of collagen, gelatin, PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA, PGA derivatives and copolymers formed of two or more of PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA and PGA derivatives.

[Claim 15] The biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 1 to 14, characterized in that the biodegradable nonwoven fabric and/or the biodegradable thread are/is comprised of one or more materials selected from the group consisting of collagen, gelatin, PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA, PGA derivatives and copolymers formed of two or more of PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA and PGA derivatives.

[Claim 16] A prosthetic material for tissue regeneration, which is filled in a defective portion in a biological tissue, comprising a biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 1 to 15.

[Claim 17] A cultured tissue, characterized in that biological tissue cells are adhered to a biodegradable substrate according to any one of claims 1 to 15.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Technical Field to Which the Invention Belongs]

The present invention relates to a biodegradable substrate, i.e., a substrate for medical use, which is made of a biodegradable material typified by collagen. In particular, the present invention relates to a substrate for medical use, which can be used for various prosthetic materials including a substrate used in cell culture for transplantation in regenerative medicine; a substrate for medical use, which can be used for various filling materials or prosthetic materials, which promote regenerative induction by making up defects in living bodies; and a substrate for medical use, which

can be used for various carriers including a sustained-release DDS carrier and a carrier for genetic therapy. Furthermore, the present invention relates to these uses, in particular, a prosthetic material for tissue regeneration and a cultured tissue.

[0002]

[Prior art and Problems thereof]

In recent years, various proposals have been made to employ woven and nonwoven fabrics made of biodegradable materials such as collagen, gelatin, and hyaluronic acid as substrates for medical use or to employ sterically-shaped textile and knitting fabrics made of collagen threads as substrates for medical use (see, for example, Patent Documents 1 to 6)

[0003]

These substrates for medical use are preferable in that they can provide comparatively large surface areas as well as being excellent in affinity to cells, such as material permeability and the invasion of cells into the substrate. In particular, since these substrates for medical use are made of biodegradable materials, they have advantages in that they do not cause any foreign-substance reaction in the living body and can be directly embedded therein for a long time.

[0004]

Nonwoven fabrics made of collagen fibers or gelatin fibers are usually prepared by a wet-type paper-making method. In this

case, however, the nonwoven fabrics thus obtained are generally fragile. In addition, it is difficult to uniformly disperse a slurried thread, and thus it is difficult to equalize the strength or thickness of the nonwoven fabric.

[0005]

Also, a nonwoven fabric itself is a flat article. For making a three-dimensional tissue having a certain thickness, there is a need to laminate thinly-formed tissues. On this account, a complicated procedure of using a previously-laminated substrate, laminating a cultured tissue, or the like is required.

[0006]

Furthermore, for increasing the strength of a nonwoven fabric, a dilute solution of collagen or gelatin has been sprayed on the nonwoven fabric thus obtained to form a filmy material. However, this work is also complicated and lowers the degrees of material permeability and the invasion of cells into the substrate. Therefore, the resulting substrate is insufficient to be used as a substrate for cell culture (see Patent Documents 3 to 5).

[0007]

In this regard, a three-dimensional substrate prepared by weaving and knitting collagen threads as described in JP 09-510639 T2 is a preferable substrate for cell culture on account of involving none of the disadvantages described above while having good affinity to cells and excellent strength.

[8000]

However, a woven fabric or the like having a three-dimensional configuration has threads extending along multiple axial directions, and collagen threads should be woven and knitted in a three-dimensional structure. Therefore, such a woven fabric is fabricated with technical difficulties.

[0009]

Besides, a single thread (collagen thread) having strength enough to be woven and knitted is very difficult to produce. Even if a single thread (collagen thread) can be produced, it is difficult to produce one having strength enough to allow the thread to be woven and knitted. Therefore, in the Example of JP 09-510639 T2, a double-ply yarn is obtained at first.

[0010]

[Patent Document 1] JP 09-47502 A (pages 2-3),

[Patent Document 2] Japanese Patent No. 3086822 B (pages 2-3),

[Patent Document 3] JP 2000-93497 A (pages 3-6),

[Patent Document 4] JP 2000-210376 A (pages 3-7),

[Patent Document 5] JP 2000-271207 A (pages 3-7),

[Patent Document 6] JP 09-510639 T2) (pages 8-16).

[0011]

[Problems to be solved by the Invention]

The present invention has been made to solve the above-mentioned problems of the conventional techniques. An object

of the present invention is to provide a biodegradable substrate for medical use, which has a structure analogous to a thick woven fabric or a knitted fabric without requiring a technically-difficult process of lamination, weaving/knitting, or the like while improving affinity to cells, particularly facilitating introduction of cells into the inside of the substrate.

[0012]

[Means to Solve the Problems]

A biodegradable substrate of the present invention has such a feature that a biodegradable nonwoven fabric is stitched with a biodegradable thread.

[0013]

In addition, the biodegradable substrate of the present invention is characterized in that a biodegradable nonwoven fabric and a biodegradable filmy material are piled on one another and both of them are stitched with a biodegradable thread. For the biodegradable substrate, as the biodegradable filmy material one having the form of a film or a sponge is preferably used.

[0014]

In the present invention, for example, as the biodegradable nonwoven fabric, use may be made of a laminated product in which a first layer and a second layer, each of which is constructed of a plurality of biodegradable threads arranged in parallel, are piled on one another such that the directions of the threads of the first

and second layers are arranged at an angle and are bonded to each other.

[0015]

In addition, there may be used a biodegradable nonwoven fabric that includes a laminated product in which a third layer having a plurality of additional biodegradable threads arranged in parallel is laminated on the first or second layer such that the arranging direction of the threads arranged in the third layer is at an angle with the arranging direction of the threads arranged in the layer adjacent to the third layer and these layers are bonded to each other.

[0016]

In each of these cases, the acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads of the first layer and the second layer, and/or the acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads of the third layer and the layer adjacent to the third layer are/is preferably about 20° or less.

[0017]

Furthermore, the acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads of the first layer and the second layer, and/or the acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads of the thirdlayer and the layer adjacent to the third layer are/ispreferably about 70° to 90°.

[0018]

As the biodegradable nonwoven fabric, use may be made of a plurality of the laminated products, where each laminated product is composed of a plurality of layers having threads arranged therein and the laminated products are piled on one another such that the arranging directions of the threads of the layers adjacent to each other at an interface between the laminated products are at an angle with each other and are bonded to each other.

[0019]

Of these biodegradable nonwoven fabrics, an acute angle which is formed by each of the threads arranged in each layer is preferably about 0 to 5°. A space between the threads arranged in each layer is preferably about 0 to 40 mm.

[0020]

In the present invention, stitches may be in a dotted pattern. The intervals of stitches are desirably about 0.1 mm to 100 mm.

[0021]

Furthermore, in the present invention, the surface of the biodegradable nonwoven fabric and/or the surface of the biodegradable thread are/is preferably coated with a biodegradable material. The biodegradable material is characteristically made of one or more a material selected from the group consisting of collagen, gelatin, PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA, PGA derivatives and copolymers formed from two or more of PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA and PGA derivatives.

[0022]

The biodegradable nonwoven fabric and/or the biodegradable thread used in the present invention is preferably made of one or more of a material selected from the group consisting of collagen, gelatin, PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA, PGA derivatives and copolymers formed from two or more of PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA and PGA derivatives.

[0023]

The prosthetic material for tissue regeneration of the present invention is characterized by a prosthetic material for tissue regeneration for filling a defective portion in a biological tissue, comprising a biodegradable substrate of the present invention as mentioned above.

[0024]

The culture tissue of the present invention is characterized in that tissue cells in the living body are adhered, while maintaining their function, to the biodegradable substrate of the present invention.

[0025]

[Embodiment Mode of the Invention]

A biodegradable substrate of the present invention is characterized as comprising a biodegradable nonwoven fabric, where the biodegradable nonwoven fabric is stitched using a biodegradable nonwoven article. The term "biodegradable" as used in the present

invention means that, when placed in a human or animal living body, a substance will be fused with a human or animal tissue or completely decomposed in the living body, and the substance to be used is any material adaptive to the living body. Examples of the biodegradable nonwoven fabric or biodegradable thread used in the present invention include living body-derived biomaterials such as collagen and gelatin, biodegradable synthetic materials such as PLA (polylactic acid), PLA derivatives, PGA (polyglycolic acid), PGA derivatives and copolymers of two or more selected from PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA and PGA derivatives. Of these, collagen is preferable in terms of cytotropic and biocompatible properties. Furthermore, most preferable is atelocollagen which has been subjected to a treatment for removing telopeptide which is an antigenic determinant of collagen, and to a solubilization treatment at the same time. general, the original sources of collagen include, but are not particularly limited to, cows, pigs, birds, fish, rabbits, sheep, mice, and human beings. The collagen can be obtained from skins, tendons, bones, cartilages, and organs of these animal species by any of various extraction methods known in the art. In addition, collagen is not limited to any of those which can be classified into types I, II, and III. Of these, however, the type I is particularly preferable in terms of handling.

[0026]

The biodegradable nonwoven fabric used in the present invention

is any of various nonwoven fabrics which have been known in the art and those described in Patent Document 1 or 2 described above are exemplified. As will be described hereinafter, a nonwoven fabric including a laminated product structure in which first and second layers each having a plurality of biodegradable threads arranged in parallel are piled on one another is more preferably used.

[0027]

Here, the layer having a plurality of biodegradable threads arranged in parallel means a layer in which threads are linearly arranged on the same plane at substantially regular intervals. An angle between the threads arranged on the same layer is about 0 to 5°, preferably 0°. In other words, the term "parallel" as used in the present invention means the range defined by this angle, but does not precisely mean "parallel". The distance between the threads on the same layer is generally in the range of about 0 to 40 mm, preferably about 0 to 10 mm, more preferably about 0 to 1 mm.

[0028]

The term "lamination" indicates that the arranging directions of the threads of the first layer and the second layer are at an angle and the threads are piled on one another while being bonded to each other, and the acute angle between the directions in which the thread is arranged in the first layer and the thread is arranged in the second layer is not 0°. The phrase "first and second layers

are piled on one another" means such a state that the first and second layers are in surface contact with each other.

[0029]

The biodegradable nonwoven fabric suitably used in the present invention may be one having a laminated product constructed of at least two layers as described above, wherein a third layer having a plurality of such biodegradable threads arranged therein in parallel is further laminated such that the arranging directions of the threads of the first or second layer and the third layer extend at an angle with each other to form a laminated product of three layers bonded to one another. Furthermore, the biodegradable nonwoven fabric may include a laminated product constructed of four layers, where, on both sides of the laminated product composed of the first and second layers, layers having biodegradable threads arranged therein in parallel are similarly laminated. Alternatively, it may include a laminated product constructed of five or more layers, in which an additional layer having a plurality of threads arranged in parallel is similarly laminated. In this way, the nonwoven fabric is one including two or more layers piled on one another such that the arranging directions of the threads of the layers adjacent to each other are at an angle with each other.

In the present invention, the term "layers adjacent to each other" means a state in which the layers having threads arranged therein are in surface contact with each other, and the "layers

adjacent to each other" means upper and lower layers laminated in surface contact with each other. Angles between the threads in a layer to be laminated as a third layer and the intervals between those threads are preferably within the ranges described above, respectively.

[0030]

In these nonwoven fabrics, the acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads of the first and second layers may be any other angle than 0°, preferably 20° or less, more preferably 10° or less. In addition, the arranging direction of the biodegradable thread of one layer is at an angle with the arranging direction of the layer adjacent thereto. The thread arranging directions of the layers which are not adjacent to each other do not always need to form any angle therebetween, that is, the angle therebetween may be 0°. For example, in the laminated product composed of three layers, when the third layer is laminated on the second layer, the arranging directions of the threads of the first and second layers should be at an angle with each other and also those of the second and third layers should be at an angle with each other. However, the arranging directions of the threads of the first and third layers may be at an angle with each other or may be at an angle of 0°. The angle between the arranging directions of the threads in the third and second layers is preferably about 20° or less, more preferably 10° or less. Note that the case in

which the arranging directions of the threads of the first and third layers are at an angle of 0° with each other is the case in which the arranging direction of the threads of the third layer is at an acute angle of -20° with that of the second layer when the arranging direction of the thread of the second layer is at an acute angle of 20° with that of the first layer. Of course, there is no trouble even if the arranging direction of the thread of the third layer is additionally at an angle of 20° with that of the second layer, i.e., at an acute angle of 40° with that of the first layer.

[0031]

The nonwoven fabric of the present invention may have an acute angle of preferably about 70° to 90°, more preferably at about 80° to 90° between the arranging directions of the threads of the first and second layers. In this case as well, the arranging directions of the biodegradable threads are at an angle with each other in the layers adjacent to each other, while the arranging directions of the threads of the layers which are not adjacent to each other are not necessarily at an angle with each other, so that they can be at an angle of 0° with each other. Furthermore, when the third layer is laminated, the acute angle between the arranging direction of the thread of the layer adjacent to the third layer and that of the third layer is preferably about 70° to 90°, more preferably 80° to 90°. By piling the first, second, and third layers at angles within the range of the angles described above, a nonwoven fabric

in which threads arranged in parallel in the respective layers are laminated almost perpendicularly to each other can be obtained.

[0032]

The laminated product including the three or more layers may be a laminated product in which the arranging directions of the threads to be laminated are kept at a constant angle or may be a laminated product in which the angle between the arranging directions of the threads may be set at random. The former may be, for example, a laminated product in which a first layer and a second layer are piled one after the other, where an acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads of a third layer laminated on the second layer and the first layer is 0°, in such a manner that an acute angle between the arranging directions of threads of the first and second layers is at a constant angle of 20° or less. The latter may be, for example, a laminated product in which first, second, third, and other subsequent layers are piled on one another at random while angles between the arranging directions of threads of the layers adjacent to each other vary within the range of 20° or less.

[0033]

Furthermore, the nonwoven fabric used in the present invention may include a laminated product formed by piling a plurality of laminated products constructed of a plurality of layers as described above. For instance, there is a case in which the third layer forms a second laminated product different from a laminated product formed

by piling the first and second layers one after the other. In this case, the arranging directions of the threads of the layers adjacent to each other at the interface between the laminated products adjacent to each other are at an angle with each other. In case where the third layer forms the second laminated product, the arranging direction of the thread of the second layer provided as the top layer of the first laminated product and the arranging direction of the thread of the third layer provided as the bottom layer of the second laminated product are at an angle with each other. addition, the second laminated product may be a laminated product in which a plurality of third layers are piled on one another and, similar to the first laminated product, the first and second layers, each of which includes a plurality of biodegradable threads arranged in parallel, are piled on one another such that the arranging directions of the threads of the first and second layers can be at an angle and they are bonded to each other. Three or more layers may be piled on one another and bonded to each other.

[0034]

For the nonwoven fabric in which a plurality of laminated products are piled upone another, an acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads of the layers adjacent to each other at the interface of the laminated products adjacent to each other may be any other angle than 0°, preferably 70° to 90°, more preferably 80° to 90°. For instance, a nonwoven fabric constructed of threads

arranged lengthwise and breadthwise can be obtained when laminated products in which an acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads is 20° or less are piled on one another at an angle of 70° or more. Further, if they are piled on one another at an angle of 20° or less, the same effect as that of one prepared by piling the first and second layers one after the other in larger numbers can be obtained. In case where three or more laminated products are piled, the angle at the interface of the laminated products adjacent to each other may be kept constant or may be at random. As the former, for example, there is a laminated product in which a first laminated product and a second laminated product are piled on one another at a constant acute angle of about 70° to 90°.

[0035]

In the above cases, a nonwoven fabric can be fabricated by bonding the threads of the layers adjacent to each other at contact portions. For instance, when biodegradable threads used are threads prepared by a wet spinning method described later, which are not dried (in wet condition), they can be bonded by subjecting them to a drying process after lamination. In case of the biodegradable threads which were subjected to drying, crosslinking treatment and so forth after spinning, adhesion can be carried out such that a biodegradable material, e.g., a biodegradable polymer is applied on a nonwoven fabric by spraying or impregnation after lamination

and is then dried.

[0036]

The thread used in the nonwoven fabric including the above laminated product is not particularly limited as far as it has flexibility enough to be wound up like a general thread. One having higher strength is preferable, but as disclosed in JP 9-510639 T2, strength enough to bear the processing with a weaving machine or a knitting machine is not needed. In other words, as described below, the thread has only to be wound around a plate member.

[0037]

For instance, such threads include collagen threads prepared by spinning solubilized collagen provided as a spinning stock solution. Spinning a solubilized collagen solution as a spinning stock solution means that the collagen solution is used as a raw material and spun by any of various spinning methods known in the art such as a wet-type spinning method (see, for example, Patent Documents 3 to 5 as mentioned above, and JP 6-228505 A, and JP 6-228506 A).

[8800]

The term "solubilized collagen" means collagen modified so as to be soluble in a solvent, such as acid-solubilized collagen, alkali-solubilized collagen, enzyme-solubilized collagen and neutral-solubilized collagen. In particular, preferred is atelocollagen which has been subjected to treatment for removing

a telopeptide which is an antigenic determinant of the collagen simultaneously with a solubilization treatment. These solubilization methods are described in JP 46-15003 B, JP 43-259839 B, JP 43-27513 B, and so on. Note that the collagen may be originated from, but not particularly limited to, an extraction product of any of the animal species or portions described above.

[0039]

A solvent used for a solubilized collagen solution is not particularly limited as far as it makes collagen soluble. Representative solvents include dilute acid solutions such as hydrochloric acid, acetic acid and nitric acid, mixtures of water and hydrophilic organic solvents such as ethanol, methanol and acetone. Each of them may be used alone or two or more of them may be used in combination at any ratio. Of these, preferable is water.

[0040]

The concentration of collagen in the collagen solution is not particularly limited as far as it allows spinning, but preferably in the range of about 4 to 10% by weight, more preferably about 5 to 7% by weight.

[0041]

The diameter of the collagen thread is not particularly limited. The outer diameter of the collagen thread is preferably about 5 μm to 1.5 mm, and more preferably about 10 to 200 μm .

[0042]

In case where the collagen thread is spun by a wet spinning method, a collagen thread used for a nonwoven fabric may be one in a wet condition prepared by the wet spinning method, which is not subjected to drying, or may be one obtained by subjecting the article to drying, a crosslinking treatment and so forth after spinning.

[0043]

Examples of the wet spinning method for preparing the collagen thread include a method using a hydrophilic organic solvent and a method using a crosslinking agent. Of these, a collagen thread spun by the method using the crosslinking agent is preferably used.

[0044]

When the wet spinning is performed using the hydrophilic organic solvent, in general, a collagen solution is continuously discharged from a nozzle into a bath filled with a desolvating agent such as the hydrophilic organic solvent, followed by dehydration and solidification to obtain a collagen thread. Examples of the hydrophilic organic solvent include alcohols having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, such as ethanol, methanol and isopropanol, and ketones such as acetone and methylethylketone. Each of these solvents may be used alone, or two or more of them may be used in combination at any ratio. Of these, a preferable solvent is ethanol. The water content of the hydrophilic organic solvent is generally about 50% by volume or less, preferably about 30% by volume or less. The process

of spinning a collagen solution (dehydration and solidification) using the hydrophilic organic solvent is generally carried out at room temperature to about 42°C. A processing time of a sequence of dehydration and solidification is from about 4 to 5 seconds to 5 hours.

[0045]

The method of manufacturing the nonwoven fabric as described above is illustrated in Fig. 1. In this method, a plate member 1 is turned around a fixed rotation axis 2 and the collagen thread obtained above is then wound up to pile a plurality of layers in which a plurality of threads are arranged in parallel to form a first laminated product. Subsequently, a secondary laminated product is formed by further winding the collagen thread in parallel around a portion contacting with the first product such that the arranging directions of threads of layers adjacent to each other are at an angle with each other. Furthermore, in the illustrated example, the second laminated product is formed by shifting the rotation axis 2 of the plate member 1.

[0046]

The plate member 1 is a member which itself turns or the like to wind up the collagen thread. The raw material thereof is not particularly limited as far as it is a material capable of maintaining a winding state without causing adhesion to the collagen thread. Preferably, however, it is a metal, a resin, or the like. More

preferably, it is a stainless steel, a polyfluroethylene-based resin, or the like. The shape of the plate member 1 is not particularly limited as far as it allows a collagen thread to be wound up in at least two directions. Preferably, it is in the form of a plate or frame having at least three sides. More preferably, it is in the form of substantially a square-shaped plate or frame.

[0047]

Turning the plate member 1 around the fixed rotation axis 2 means that the plate member 1 rotates around an axis horizontally penetrating through the surface of the plate member 1. In addition, shifting the rotation axis 2 of the plate member 1 refers to allowing the plate member 1 to rotate around an axis 2 passing through the plate member 1, which is different from the rotation axis 2, such that it rotates "around an axis parallel to another side of the plate member which intersects the rotation axis". The rotation axis 2 is shifted to allow the collagen thread to be wound up in another direction of the plate member 1. This operation is repeated to obtain a nonwoven fabric in which aplurality of laminated products including first layers and second layers having the above threads arranged in parallel are laminated. Furthermore, in Fig. 1, reference numeral 3 denotes a reciprocating mechanism for allowing the thread to be moved reciprocately in the winding up direction.

[0048]

A driving method for turning the plate member 1 is not

particularly limited. However, it is preferable to be driven by a constant mechanical driving force. Furthermore, an operation for shifting the rotation axis 2 of the plate member 1 may be performed by hand or by a device or the like that automatically shifts the rotation axis 2. When a collagen nonwoven fabric is produced on an industrial scale, it is desirable to use an apparatus that automatically shifts the rotation axis 2 in a mechanical manner.

[0049]

In general, when a collagen thread is wound up around the plate member 1 with a constant winding-up width, the rotation axis 2 of the plate member 1 is shifted after winding up the thread by a plurality of reciprocal movements on one side of the plate member 1. In other words, a layer (first layer) is formed by winding up the thread on one side of the plate member 1 in one direction and then another layer (second layer) is formed by winding up the thread on the same side of the plate member 1 in a reverse direction. Therefore, a laminated product including laminated first and second layers can be obtained by winding up by a reciprocating movement on the one side of the plate member 1. Therefore, a laminated product (first laminated product), in which a first layer and a second layer are respectively laminated according to the number of times of reciprocating movement can be obtained by several reciprocating movements. The acute angle between the arranging directions of threads when the thread is wound up forward and backward by a

reciprocating movement is generally 20° or less, preferably about $10\,^{\circ}$ or less. This angle is set as an acute angle between the arranging directions of threads of the first and second layers (or an acute angle between the arranging directions of threads of the third layer and the layer adjacent to the third layer). Then, this angle can be adjusted by the size of the plate member 1, the number of rotations of the plate member 1, and the reciprocating speed of a reciprocating mechanism 3. In addition, even after shifting the rotation axis 2, the winding is performed similarly, and a second laminated product is obtained. However, the acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads before shifting the rotation axis 2 and after shifting the rotation axis 2 is generally about 70° to 90°, preferably about $80\degree$ to $90\degree$. This angle is provided as an acute angle between the arranging directions of threads of the layers at an interface between the laminated products adjacent to each other. Of course, the rotation axis 2 of the plate member 1 may be shifted after every reciprocating movement. One side of the plate member 1 winds up in one direction and then the rotation axis 2 of the plate member 1 is shifted to allow the plate member 1 to wind up in another direction. Like the latter case, the acute angle between the arranging directions formed after winding up by shifting the rotation axis 2 after winding up in one direction corresponds to the acute angle between the arranging directions of the threads of the first and second layers (or the acute angle between the

arranging directions of the threads of the third layer and the layer adjacent to the third layer). In this case, the acute angle is preferably about 70° to 90°. Laminated products obtained by such a reciprocating movement can be piled on one another to form a laminate of several layers. Note that a thin layer portion located on the peripheral portion (portion corresponding to a so-called frame of the plate member 1) of the thus obtained laminated product is generally removed by cutting (see Figs. 2 and 3).

[0050]

The collagen nonwoven fabric obtained by the method as described above may optionally be subjected to various kinds of known physical or chemical crosslinking treatment if necessary. The crosslinking treatment may be carried out at any stage. In other words, the nonwoven fabric may be formed using a thread which has been subjected to various crosslinking treatments. Alternatively, various crosslinking treatments may be performed after forming the nonwoven fabric. Examples of the physical crosslinking method include a gamma irradiation, an ultraviolet irradiation, an electron beam irradiation, a plasma irradiation, and a thermal dehydration reaction. On the other hand, examples of the chemical crosslinking method include a reaction with aldehyde derivatives such as dialdehyde and polyaldehyde, epoxy derivatives, carbodimide derivatives or isocyanate derivatives, a tannin treatment, and a chromium treatment. Of these, the physical crosslinking treatment

is preferably a thermal dehydration crosslinking treatment, and the chemical crosslinking treatment is preferably a crosslinking treatment with glutaraldehyde.

[0051]

Furthermore, the biodegradable nonwoven fabric obtained by the above method may be coated with a biodegradable material. Examples of the coating material include collagen, hyaluronic acid, and gelatin.

[0052]

As an example of the method of coating with the coating material, there may be mentioned a binder treatment. The binder treatment means a treatment in which a nonwoven fabric is impregnated with a solution material and then dried by an appropriate drying method to reinforce bonding between the threads in the nonwoven fabric. A collagen nonwoven fabric is formed as a filmy material by the binder treatment to improve a physical strength more than an untreated nonwoven fabric. Thus, the strength for stitching can be also improved markedly.

[0053]

However, in performing the binder treatment, in case where a collagen nonwoven fabric is not subjected to a crosslinking treatment, there is possibility that the nonwoven fabric itself dissolves in a solvent with which the nonwoven fabric is impregnated. Therefore, it is desirable to conduct crosslinking treatment

beforehand. A collagen nonwoven fabric may be subjected to crosslinking treatment again after the coating treatment, if necessary. In addition to these treatments, various methods of reinforcing bonding between the threads in the collagen nonwoven fabric can be suitably used.

[0054]

Furthermore, it is feasible to produce a nonwoven fabric after coating a thread which was subjected to crosslinking treatment, with a coating material in advance.

[0055]

The nonwoven fabric may be subjected to a treatment for entwining threads in each layer with one another. As a treatment method, for example, there may be mentioned a treatment method by which threads of each of layers in a collagen nonwoven fabric, which are piled on one another, are complicatedly entwined with one another at random by a needle punch By such a treatment, a collagen nonwoven fabric can be obtained in the form of a felt. The felt-like collagen nonwoven fabric may be subjected to a binder treatment, if required.

[0056]

Also, a nonwoven fabric can be used, which is prepared by use of a biodegradable thread obtained from a biodegradable material such as gelatin, in addition to collagen, and the nonwoven fabric can be used, which is prepared by use of a biodegradable thread article obtained from a synthetic material as described above. These

nonwoven fabrics can be produced by the known methods, for example, a method described in Patent Document 6 above as an example of the methods using gelatin.

[0057]

The biodegradable substrate of the present invention is obtained by stitching the thus obtained nonwoven fabric with the biodegradable thread. In other words, if it is compared to woven fabric, the thread (hereinafter, referred to as "thread for stitching") fulfills a function as a warp thread for interweaving a two-dimensional woven fabric in the vertical direction. The thread for stitching fixes threads or fibers not interwoven which constitute the nonwoven fabric, preventing the threads or fibers from getting loose to increase the strength of the nonwoven fabric. Fig. 2 illustrates a state in which a biodegradable substrate is produced by stitching the nonwoven fabric.

[0058]

The biodegradable thread for stitching is not particularly limited as far as it has flexibility like a normal thread and can be wound up. For example, the thread used for the manufacture of the biodegradable nonwoven fabric mentioned above can be employed as it is. In addition, the thread for stitching may be a single thread or a twisted thread. If it is a twisted thread, the number of threads to be twisted is, but is not limited to, preferably about 2 to 6. In addition, in case where it is a twisted thread, the above

crosslinking treatment may be performed during the process of twisting or the thread may be subjected to the crosslinking treatment in advance and then subjected to the process of twisting.

[0059]

The term "stitching" means that a nonwoven fabric is stitched using the above biodegradable single thread or twisted thread. For instance, any of stitching methods used in the industry of dress and their ornaments, such as straight stitch, wave stitch, half-back stitch, and blanket stitch can be adopted. Preferably, a nonwoven fabric can be stitched to such a degree that threads and fibers forming the nonwoven fabric cannot be loosened. The stitching may be performed by hand or using a machine such as a sewing machine. A stitching position may be any position depending on the size thereof and the purpose of use as far as it attains the object described above. It is preferable to stitch up at least the periphery of the biodegradable nonwoven fabric, more preferably, uniformly the whole area of the nonwoven fabric. In addition, when the whole area of the nonwoven fabric is stitched, stitching is performed so that stitching lines are aligned in the same direction or stitching lines traverse in the vertical or horizontal direction. Preferably, stitching is performed such that stitching lines can be traversed at an angle of about 90°.

[0060]

The stitching may be not always continuously performed.

Stitch points like those found in a cushion are allowable. Any number of stitches can be allowed. For instance, the stitches may be only provided on the central portion of the nonwoven fabric, but if the number of stitches is too small, warp threads and weft threads may become easily loose. Preferably, therefore, the stitches are uniformly dispersed.

[0061]

The intervals (pitches) of the stitching or stitches are, but are not particularly limited to, preferably in the range of about 0.1 mm to 100 mm, more preferably in the range of about 1 mm to 10 mm. However, in case where a filmy nonwoven fabric is stitched or a filmy material described later and the biodegradable nonwoven fabric are combined together and then stitched, the strength of the filmy material may be decreased, since the number of stitching pores penetrated through the filmy material increases too much, and the pitches of the stitching or the intervals of the stitches are narrowed too much. Therefore, attention should be given to this possibility.

[0062]

In the present invention, as described above, it is possible to not only stitch one piece of biodegradable nonwoven fabric, but also to pile two or three of the fabrics on one another to be stitched together. For instance, another biodegradable filmy material may be superimposed on the biodegradable nonwoven fabric as shown in

Fig. 3 and then stitched together. Therefore, a substrate formedical application having a thickness almost equal to or higher than that of a woven fabric can be obtained. The thickness of the biodegradable nonwoven fabric is, but not particularly limited to, generally about several hundreds of μ m to several mm, or several tens of mm or more in the case of a larger size. In addition, the thickness of the biodegradable nonwoven fabric varies depending on the use thereof and is, for example, practically about 5mm at most in the case of a cell-culture substrate as described later.

[0063]

As is in the case of the biodegradable nonwoven fabric or the biodegradable thread described above, the biodegradable filmy materials to be superimposed include those made of living body-derived biomaterials such as collagen and gelatin, and biodegradable synthetic materials such as PLA (polylactic acid), PLA derivatives, PGA (polyglycolic acid), PGA derivatives, and copolymers of two or more selected from PLA, PLA derivatives, PGA, and PGA derivatives. Of these, collagen is preferable in terms of cytotropic and biocompatible properties. Furthermore, most preferable is atelocollagen which has been subjected to a treatment of removing telopeptide which is an antigenic determinant of collagen, simultaneously with a solubilization treatment. In general, the original sources of collagen include, but are not particularly limited to, cows, pigs, birds, fish, rabbits, sheep, mice, and human

beings. The collagen can be obtained from skins, tendons, bones, cartilages, and organs of these animal species by any of various extraction methods known in the art. In addition, collagen is not limited to any of those which can be classified into types I, II, III, and so on. Of these, however, the type I is particularly preferable in terms of handling. Also, any combination between the origin of the nonwoven fabric and the origin of the filmy material is allowable.

[0064]

The filmy materials may be in the form of a sheet or film or may be in the form of a sponge having multiple pores, but are not particularly limited to these. A biodegradable nonwoven fabric or the like may be used, but particularly preferable is a biodegradable nonwoven fabric which has been subjected to a binder treatment with a biodegradable material as described above.

[0065]

The position of a filmy material to be superimposed is not particularly limited. In other words, it may be placed on or under a biodegradable nonwoven fabric. The filmy material may be placed between the biodegradable nonwoven fabrics and the number of laminated layers is not limited. Furthermore, by adjusting the tension of a stitching thread and the number of the laminated nonwoven fabrics, it is possible to control the void fraction.

[0066]

In this way, the biodegradable substrate of the present invention includes a biodegradable nonwoven fabric which has been stitched with a biodegradable thread. The thread does not require the strength required in a loom or a knitting machine, so that a biodegradable substrate having properties, particularly strength and thickness, similar to woven fabrics can be obtained in an extremely simple manner. The nonwoven fabric is only stitched with the thread. Therefore, there involves no technical difficulty and no use of a special machine such as a loom or knitting machine. It can be prepared using only a simple machine such as a sewing machine. Besides, the threads and fibers, which constitute the nonwoven fabric, are previously bonded to one another. Therefore, a nonwoven fabric which is stable in strength can be simply produced as the thread is hardly loosened when the nonwoven fabric is cut. Since the nonwoven fabric is only subjected to the stitching, the invasion of cells into the substrate and material permeability are not affected by the nonwoven fabric, and it is possible to culture cells in three dimensions.

[0067]

In particular, in case where a nonwoven fabric including a laminated product in which a first layer and a second layer where a plurality of threads are arranged in parallel are piled on one another is used, the laminated threads can be fixed by stitching threads. The first and second layers in which threads are arranged

in parallel are stitched as if the first layer and the second layer are provided as the warp threads and the weft. Therefore, the threads that constitute the nonwoven fabric can be prevented from loosing, and thus it is rare to cause a decrease in strength even if it is cut into any form. Besides, for piling a large number of the first and second layers, there is a need of winding up a very long thread repeatedly into many layers. However, according to the present invention, a substrate having a larger thickness can be obtained by piling many laminated products in which each of the laminated products has a smaller number of layers. Furthermore, the nonwoven fabric has an extremely uniform thickness and provides a substrate having excellent uniformity, compared with one prepared by piling and weaving nonwoven fabrics obtained by a wet paper making method. The thickness or strength of the nonwoven fabric can be comparatively easily and freely adjusted just like a woven fabric or a knitted fabric by adjusting the tension of the stitching thread.

[0068]

In the case of piling up a filmy material on the nonwoven fabric, there is no specific method required to join the nonwoven fabric and the filmy material. Besides, both of them are stitched together with a biodegradable thread and thus are hardly loosened. Thus, a substrate also having stable quality can be prepared by a simple method.

[0069]

The prosthetic material for tissue regeneration of the present invention includes the biodegradable substrate (stitched product) obtained as described above. In other words, the biodegradable substrate can be used as a prosthetic material for tissue regeneration (substrate for transplantation), which is transplanted into the living body as filling and prosthetic materials for tissue regeneration, for example, in the field of tissue engineering and regenerative medicine. That is, the biodegradable substrate of the present invention is provided to fill a tissue-defective portion in the living body or on the surface of the body to facilitate the regeneration of the lost biological tissue. Specifically, for example, it can be directly applied as a filmy material for the pericardium, pleura, cerebral dura mater, chorion, and the like to a membrane site removed by a surgical operation. The biodegradable substrate gradually decomposes and is absorbed as the filmy material covering the biological tissue regenerates. Also, as a prosthetic material, it may fill a hole after the extraction of tooth or a hole opened in dental bone to seal the hole until the regeneration of gingival tissue or dental bone. It may be processed into a tubular article such as an artificial blood vessel, a stent, an artificial nerve channel, an artificial trachea, an artificial esophagus, or an artificial ureter, or bag-like articles to be embedded in the living body. As a method of preparing the tubular article, there may be mentioned a method by which the biodegradable substrate

obtained is wound around a tube or the like made of polyfluoroethylene fibers using a collagen solution as adhesives, and is dried, followed by pulling the tube out.

[0070]

Furthermore, for preparing a three-dimensional structure, for example, there may be mentioned a method by which a thick substrate is directly cut and processed, or the substrate obtained is placed in a mold, followed by pouring a biodegradable polymer solution in the mold through a hole formed therein and drying using various methods.

[0071]

The cultured tissue of the present invention is characterized in that biological tissue cells are adhered, while maintaining their function, to the biodegradable substrate of the present invention. In other words, the biodegradable substrate of the present invention can be also used for a substrate (cell-culture substrate) for in vitroculture of various cells such as adhesive cells. Specifically, the above biodegradable substrate is shaped into a predetermined form and then cells that form body tissues, such as fibroblasts and chondrocytes, are previously cultivated on a culture substrate for a predetermined period according to a conventional method, and then, the cells may be grown into the shape of the culture substrate to form a biological tissue, followed by transplantion into the body. Here, the term "biological tissue" means a tissue whose cells

can be cultured in vitro and includes all tissues which can be cultured, such as cardiac muscles, blood vessels, and skins. For example, cardiac muscle cells may be cultured on the biodegradable substrate and then transplanted together with the biodegradable substrate. After shaping the biodegradable substrate into a tubular material, vascular endothelial cells or epithelial cells may be cultured there and then transplanted together with the biodegradable substrate. After the transplantation, the substrate can be naturally degraded and removed. There is no need for any subsequent operation to remove the substrate.

[0072]

Furthermore, the biodegradable substrate can be impregnated with various growth factors, medicaments, vectors, and the like so as to be used as drug-delivery system carriers, sustained-release agent carriers, gene therapy carriers, and the like.

[0073]

[Examples]

Hereinafter, the present invention will be described in more detail with reference to examples.

Example 1 Production of collagen nonwoven fabric

Collagen type I and type III powders from a pig (manufactured by Nippon Meat Packers, Inc., SOFD type, Lot No. 0102226) were dissolved in injectable distilled water (manufactured by Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.) and adjusted to 7 wt%. Subsequently, this

7 wt% collagen aqueous solution was filled into a syringe (manufactured by EFD Inc., Disposable Barrels/Pistons, 55 mL) and extruded into an ethanol bath by air pressure through a needle fitted to the syringe. In this case, the syringe was fitted with a needle of Ultra Dispensing Tips available from EFD Inc., (27G, ID: ϕ 0.21 mm). The extruded 7 wt% collagen aqueous solution was dehydrated to become threadlike and then pulled out from the ethanol bath. The collagen thread thus pulled out was immersed at room temperature for approximately 30 seconds in a second ethanol bath completely separate from the above-described ethanol bath for further solidification. Subsequently, the collagen thread pulled out from the second ethanol bath was wound onto a 15 cm-sided and 5 mm-thick plate member rotating at 15 rpm as shown in Fig. 1. A reciprocating mechanism that periodically moves the horizontal position of the collagen thread for uniformly winding up the collagen thread onto the plate member was arranged immediately in front of the plate member, the reciprocating speed of which was set at 1.5 mm/second (the thread was wound up at an interval of approximately 6 mm). A wind-up device was allowed to change the direction of the rotation axis in the plate member in 90-degree angles, every time it wound up the thread 500 times, and 500-time wind-ups were repeated 9 times (total number of wind-ups: 4500, a laminated product having 9 layers in total) to give a collagen wound-up material having layers of the collagen threads on both sides of the plate member. Next, this collagen wound-up material was naturally dried at room temperature for 4 hours and was then cut along its end to give 2 collagen nonwoven fabrics. Thereafter, the obtained collagen nonwoven fabrics were subjected to thermal dehydration crosslinking reaction under reduced pressure (1 Torr or less) at 135°C for 24 hours using a vacuum dry oven (manufactured by EYELA Inc.: VOS-300VD type) and an oil-sealed rotary vacuum pump (manufactured by ULVAC KIKO Inc.: GCD135-XA type). The resultant had a thickness of approximately 3 mm.

[0074]

Example 2 Secondary process to collagen filmy material

Collagen type I and type III mixed powders from a pig (manufactured by Nippon Meat Packers, Inc., SOFD type, Lot No. 010226) were dissolved in injectable distilled water (manufactured by Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.) and adjusted to 1 wt%. In this collagen aqueous solution adjusted to 1 wt% was immersed one of the collagen nonwoven fabrics after thermal dehydration crosslinking reaction obtained in Example 1, followed by forming into a film and sufficient air-drying at room temperature. Then, the same vacuum dry oven as mentioned above was used to carry out thermal dehydration crosslinking reaction under reduced pressure (1 Torr or less) at 135°C for 12 hours to give a filmy collagen nonwoven fabric.

[0075]

Example 3 Production of collagen single thread

As described in Example 1, a 7 wt% collagen aqueous solution

was prepared. Then, after the whole spinning environment described below was kept at a relative humidity of 38% or less, a syringe (manufactured by EFD Inc., Disposable Barrels/Pistons, 55 mL) filled with the 7 wt% collagen aqueous solution was allowed to receive air pressure to extrude the collagen aqueous solution through a needle fitted to the syringe. In this case, the syringe was fitted with a needle of Ultra Dispensing Tips available from EFD Inc., (27G, ID: 0.21 mm). The extruded 7 wt% collagen aqueous solution was immediately dehydrated and solidified into a thread shape in an ethanol bath containing 3 L of 99.5 vol% ethanol (Wako Pure Chemical Industries, Ltd., special grade). The threadlike collagen pulled out from the ethanol bath was immersed at room temperature for approximately 30 seconds in a second ethanol bath containing 3 L of 99.5 vol% ethanol (Wako Pure Chemical Industries, special grade), which is completely separate from the above-described ethanol bath, for additional dehydration and solidification. Subsequently, the threadlike collagen pulled out from the second ethanol bath was passed through an air dryer supplying dry air into its surroundings in 3 seconds and was then wound up onto a roll-like wind-up tool made of stainless steel with a diameter of 78 mm and an overall length of 200 mm which was allowed to rotate at 35 rpm, while the tension was maintained with a tension pulley to prevent the thread from loosing. This roll-like wind-up tool wound up the threadlike collagen while reciprocating it at a speed of 1.5 mm/s in the axis

direction of the roll-like wind-up tool and carried out continuous spinning until the 7 wt% collagen aqueous solution filled into the syringe ran out. In this manner, a bobbin of collagen single thread was obtained.

[0076]

Example 4 Thermal dehydration and crosslinking reaction treatment of collagen single thread

The collagen single thread produced in Example 3 was subjected to thermal dehydration and crosslinking reaction treatment in the state of being wound up in a roll-like wind-up tool made of stainless steel under reduced pressure (1 Torr or less) at 135°C for 24 hours using the same vacuum dry oven as described above to give a bobbin of collagen single thread treated with thermal crosslinking.

[0077]

Example 5 Stitching of collagen nonwoven fabric

Six collagen nonwoven fabrics as produced in Example 1 were piled on one another and stitched with a two-ply thread twisted with the collagen single thread as produced in Example 3 to give a three-dimensional biodegradable substrate having a collagen thread structure. A sewing machine (manufactured by Jaguar Inc., Model KM-570) was used for stitching. Sewing patterns were composed of straight stitches having a pitch of 2 to 3 mm and the fabric was stitched lengthwise and crosswise (at an interval of approximately 1 cm) around the collagen nonwoven fabric and over the nonwoven

fabric.

[0078]

Example 6 Stitching of collagen nonwoven fabric and collagen filmy material

The collagen nonwoven fabric as produced in Example 1 was piled on the collagen nonwoven fabric formed into a film as produced in Example 2, and stitched with a thermal-crosslinked two-ply thread twisted with the collagen single thread as produced in Example 4 to give a three-dimensional biodegradable substrate having a collagen thread structure. A stitching method was the same as that in Example 5.

[0079]

Experimental Example 1 Fibroblast culture experiment

Human fibroblast culture was carried out on the substrate made of collagen which was obtained in Example 5. For culture, there was used a mixed medium in which 500 mL of Medium 106S (basal medium) and 10 mL of LSGS (Low Serum Growthfactor Supplement) (both are manufactured by Cascade Biologics, Inc.) were mixed.

At first, the collagen nonwoven fabric was left to stand in a petri dish (manufactured by CORNING Inc., 6 wells) and 1 mL of the above-described mixed medium in which the cells were suspended to have a concentration of 4.0×10^5 cells/mL was applied onto the substrate. Then, 3 mL of the medium was gently poured into the petri dish and left to stand for culture under the culture conditions

of a temperature of $37^{\circ}C$ and a CO_2 concentration of 5%.

Fig. 4 shows the state of the adhesion of the cells, while maintaining their function, to the substrate and the amplification of the cells after 14 days from the initiation of culture. As a result, it was confirmed that the cells firmly adhered, while maintaining their function, to the collagen threads arranged lengthwise and crosswise. It was also confirmed that the cells were well amplified along the collagen thread constituting the substrate. This indicates that the substrate can sufficiently function as a three-dimensional culture substrate made of collagen according to the present invention.

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Experimental Example 2 Chondrocyte culture experiment

Human chondrocyte culture was carried out on the substrate made of collagen which was obtained in Example 5. For culture, there was used a mixed medium in which 500 mL of basal medium and 10 mL of Growth Supplement (both are manufactured by CELL APPLICATIONS, Inc.) were mixed.

At first, the collagen nonwoven fabric was left to stand in a petri dish (manufactured by CORNING Inc., 6 wells) and 1 mL of the above-described mixed medium in which the cells were suspended to have a concentration of 4.0×10^5 cells/mL was applied onto the substrate. Then, 3 mL of the medium was gently poured into the petri dish and left to stand for culture under the culture conditions

of a temperature of 37°C and a CO2 concentration of 5%.

Fig. 5 shows the state of the adhesion of the cells, while maintaining their function, to the substrate and the amplification of the cells after 14 days from the initiation of culture. As a result, it was confirmed that the cells firmly adhered, while maintaining their function, to the collagen threads arranged lengthwise and crosswise. It was also confirmed that the cells were well amplified along the collagen thread constituting the substrate. This demonstrates that the substrate can sufficiently function as a three-dimensional culture substrate made of collagen according to the present invention.

[0081]

[Effect of the Invention]

The biodegradable substrate of the present invention includes a biodegradable nonwoven fabric which is stitched with a biodegradable thread. Thus, a nonwoven fabric having excellent affinity to cells and given thickness and strength can be easily obtained from a thin nonwoven fabric having insufficient strength by a simple apparatus such as a sewing machine. In addition, a biodegradable thread used for the nonwoven fabric or a biodegradable thread used for stitching requires strength sufficient for the fabric to be wound up but does not require strength necessary for the fabric to be used in a loom or a knitting machine. Therefore, a biodegradable thread obtained by any method conventionally known in the art can

be directly used. In particular, a biodegradable thread such as a collagen thread is hardly imparted with high strength. However, it is possible to produce a biodegradable substrate having properties comparable with those of a woven or knitted fabric, for example, sufficient strength and thickness even from such collagen threads. Besides, the cut biodegradable fabric is rare to loosen the warp and the weft unlike woven fabrics, and thus can be molded into any desired shape. Further, the thickness and strength can be relatively freely adjusted, whereby the substrate enabling the three-dimensional cell culture can be obtained with ease and at low cost.

[0082]

In the present invention, a biodegradable filmy material in the form of a film or sponge and so forth is piled on the biodegradable nonwoven fabric to be stitched using a biodegradable thread. Thus, without using a complicated method to join the nonwoven fabric and the filmy material, a laminated product of the nonwoven fabric and the filmy material is obtained.

[0083]

In the present invention, use is desirably made of the biodegradable unwoven fabric comprising a laminated product wherein the arranging directions between plural the biodegradable threads arranged therein in parallel of the first layer and the second layer are at an angle and the threads are piled on one another while being

bonded to each other; or the biodegradable nonwoven fabric comprising a laminated product wherein a third layer having plural biodegradable threads arranged therein in parallel is further laminated on the first or the second layer the such that the arranging directions between the threads of the layer adjacent to the third layer and the third layer extend at an angle with each other to form a laminated product of three layers bonded to one another. Such unwoven fabric can makes the most of merit of the present invention.

[0084]

These biodegradable substrates can be used as a prosthetic material for tissue regeneration to fill the tissue-defective portion in the biological tissue. Also, the cultured tissue which can be transplanted into the living body is prepared by the method in which biological tissue cells are adhered, keeping their function to the biodegradable substrate of the present invention. Thus, the present invention can greatly contribute to regenerative medicine.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Fig. 1] Fig. 1 is an explanatory diagram illustrating one example of a method of manufacturing a biodegradable nonwoven fabric used in the present invention.

[Fig. 2] Fig. 2 is an explanatory diagram illustrating a method of manufacturing a biodegradable substrate according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[Fig. 3] Fig. 3 is an explanatory diagram illustrating a method

of manufacturing a biodegradable substrate according to another embodiment of the present invention.

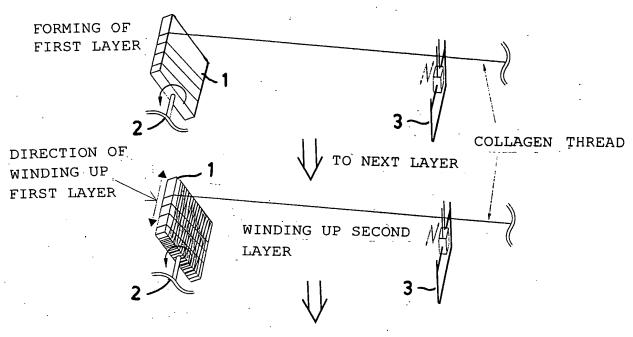
[Fig. 4] Fig. 4 is a photograph representing a state in which fibroblasts adhere, while maintaining their function, to the biodegradable substrate of the present invention by culturing.

[Fig. 5] Fig. 5 is a photograph representing a state in which human chondrocytes adhere, while maintaining their function, to the biodegradable substrate of the present invention by culturing.

[Description of the Marks]

- 1. Plate member
- 2. Rotation axis

FIG. 1



SUPERIMPOSING ANY NUMBER OF LAYERS

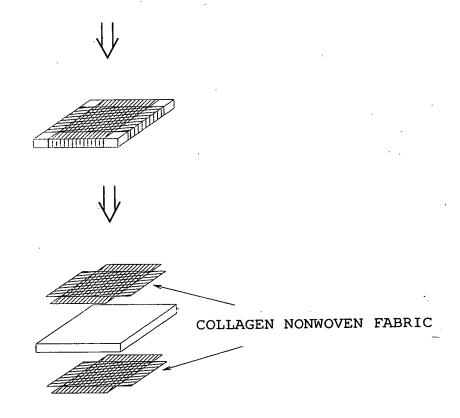
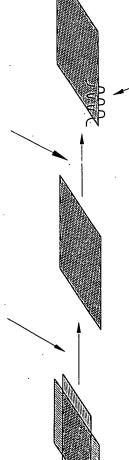


FIG. 2



STITCHING (SEWING MACHINE)



COLLAGEN NONWOVEN FABRIC COLLAGEN NONWOVEN FABRIC

COLLAGEN SINGLE THREAD

COLLAGEN SINGLE THREAD

....

___ -:

COLLAGEN AQUEOUS SOLUTION IMPREGNATED NON-LAMINATED PORTIONS ARE CUT AND REMOVED

COLLAGEN FILMY

COLLAGEN NONWOVEN

FABRIC

MATERIAL

FIG. 3

COLLAGEN NONWOVEN FABRIC

COLLAGEN NONWOVEN FABRIC

Fig. 4



Fig. 5



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Q0/533307 JC17 Rec'd PCT/PTO 29 APR 2005

[Document Name] Abstract

[Summary]

[Problems] The present invention relates to a biodegradable substrate for medical application having a structure resemble to a thick woven fabric, which is prepared without involving any technically difficult process such as the formation of multi-layers and weaving/knitting, while improving affinity to cells, particularly facilitating an entry of cells into the inside of the substrate.

[Solving means] The biodegradable substrate of the present invention can be obtained by stitching a biodegradable nonwoven fabric with a biodegradable thread. Examples of the nonwoven fabric include one prepared by superimposing a first layer and a second layer over one another, each of which includes a plurality of collagen threads arranged in parallel, such that arranging directions of the threads of the first and second layers are at an angle with each other; adhering the first and second layers to each other; and stitching them with a collagen thread by wave stitch or the like. In addition, on the nonwoven fabric, a filmy material subjected to a binder treatment with a biodegradable material such as collagen or gelatin may be superimposed and stitched together. The resulting biodegradable substrate can be used as a prosthetic material for tissue regeneration or a substrate for cell culture.

[Selected Drawings] Fig. 2

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【発明の名称】

生分解性基材及び組織再生用補綴材並びに培養組織

【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 生分解性不織布が、生分解性糸状物によって縫製されたことを特徴とする生分解性基材。

【請求項2】 生分解性不織布と生分解性膜状物が重ね合わされ、生分解性 糸状物によって両者が縫製されたことを特徴とする生分解性基材。

【請求項3】 前記生分解性膜状物が、フィルム状又はスポンジ状であることを特徴とする請求項2に記載の生分解性基材。

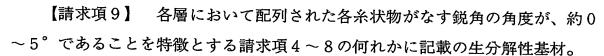
【請求項4】 前記生分解性不織布は、生分解性糸状物を複数本平行に配列されてなる第1の層と第2の層が、第1の層と第2の層との糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着している積層体を含むことを特徴とする請求項1~3の何れかに記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項5】 前記積層体は、第1の層又は第2の層の上に、さらに生分解性糸状物が複数本平行に配列された第3の層が、該第3の層の糸状物の配列方向と該第3の層と接する層の糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着していることを特徴とする請求項4に記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項6】 前記第1の層の糸状物の配列方向と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度及び/又は前記第3の層の糸状物の配列方向と該第3の層と接する層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が、約20°以下であることを特徴とする請求項4又は5の何れかに記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項7】 前記第1の層の糸状物の配列方向と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度及び/又は前記第3の層の糸状物の配列方向と該第3の層と接する層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が、約70°~90°であることを特徴とする請求項4又は5の何れかに記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項8】 前記生分解性不織布は、糸状物を配列されてなる層が複数積層された前記積層体を複数含み、積層体同士が接する部分において互いに接する層の糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層体が積層し、相互に接着していることを特徴とする請求項4~7の何れかに記載の生分解性基材。



【請求項10】 各層において配列された糸状物の間隔が約 $0\sim40\,\mathrm{mm}$ であることを特徴とする請求項 $4\sim9$ の何れかに記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項11】 縫製が点状になされたことを特徴とする請求項 $1\sim 10$ の何れかに記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項12】 前記縫製の間隔が約0.1mm~100mmであることを特徴とする請求項11に記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項13】 前記生分解性不織布の表面及び/又は生分解性糸状物の表面が生分解性物質でコーティングされたことを特徴とする請求項1~12の何れかに記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項14】 前記生分解性物質が、コラーゲン、ゼラチン、PLA、PLA誘導体、PGA及びPGA誘導体並びにPLA、PLA誘導体、PGA、PGA誘導体のうち何れか2種以上による共重合体からなる群から選ばれた何れか1種以上からなることを特徴とする請求項13に記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項15】 前記生分解性不織布及び/又は前記生分解性糸状物が、コラーゲン、ゼラチン、PLA、PLA誘導体、PGA及びPGA誘導体並びにPLA、PLA誘導体、PGA、PGA誘導体のうち何れか2種以上による共重合体からなる群から選ばれた何れか1種以上からなることを特徴とする請求項1~14の何れかに記載の生分解性基材。

【請求項16】 生体組織の欠損部に補填される組織再生用補綴材であって、請求項1~15の何れかに記載の生分解性基材からなることを特徴とする組織再生用補綴材。

【請求項17】 請求項1~15の何れかに記載の生分解性基材に生体組織 細胞が生着されたことを特徴とする培養組織。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明が属する技術分野】

本発明は生分解性基材、すなわちコラーゲンに代表される生分解性物質からな



る医療用の基材に関する。詳細には再生医療における移植用細胞培養基材等の各種培養基材としての用途並び生体内欠損部を補填することにより再生誘導を促す各種補填材、補綴材としての用途に用いられる医療用基材、また、徐放性DDS担体、遺伝子治療用担体等の各種担体としての用途にも利用しうる医療用基材に関する。さらに、本発明はこれらの用途に関するものであり、具体的には、組織再生用補綴材及び培養組織に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術とその問題点】

近年、医療用基材として、コラーゲンやゼラチン、ヒアルロン酸などの生分解性物質からなる織布や不織布、あるいはコラーゲン糸からなる立体的な形状を有する織物や編物を用いることが種々提案されている(例えば特許文献1~6参照)。

[0003]

これらの医療用基材は、物質透過性や細胞侵入性などの細胞親和性に優れており、基材表面積も比較的確保できる点で好ましい。特に、これらは生分解性物質から作製されているため、生体内で異物反応を起こさず、そのまま長期間埋入しておける利点を有する。

[0004]

しかし、コラーゲン繊維やゼラチン繊維からなる不織布は、通常、湿式抄紙法で作製されるが、得られた不織布は総じて脆弱である。また、スラリー化した糸状物を均一に分散させることが難しく、強度や厚みを均一化することが困難である。

[0005]

また、不織布はそれ自体厚みを有しないので、ある程度の厚みを有する立体的な組織を作製するには薄く作製した組織を重層化しなければならない。このため、予め積層した基材を用いたり、培養された組織を積層するなど、煩雑な作業が必要とされる。

[0006]

さらに、不織布の強度を増すために、得られた不織布にコラーゲンやゼラチン



等の希薄溶液を噴霧して膜状物を形成させることも行われているが、この作業も 煩雑であり、何よりも物質透過性や細胞侵入性が低下してしまい、細胞培養用の 基材としては十分なものではなかった(特許文献3~5参照)。

[0007]

この点、特表平9-510639号公報に記載されたコラーゲン糸が織り編みされた立体的な基材は、かかる欠点もなく、細胞親和性もよく、優れた強度を有しているので、細胞培養用の基材としては好ましいものである。

[0008]

しかしながら、立体的な形状を有する織布等は多軸方向に沿った糸を有し、コラーゲン糸を立体的に織り編まなければならないので、その製造には技術的な困難を伴う。

[0009]

また、織り編み可能な程度の強度を有する単糸(コラーゲン糸)を製造することが非常に困難で、かつ製造できたとしても合成繊維等に比べて強度が低く、単糸そのものでの製造は非常に難しい。このため、特表平9-510639号公報の実施例ではまず2諸撚糸を得ることにしている。

[0010]

【特許文献1】

特開平9-47502号公報(第2-3頁)

【特許文献2】

特許第3086822号公報 (第2-3頁)

【特許文献3】

特開2000-93497号公報(第3-6頁)

【特許文献4】

特開2000-210376号公報(第3-7頁)

【特許文献5】

特開2000-271207号公報(第3-7頁)

【特許文献6】

特表平9-510639号公報 (第8-16頁)



【発明が解決しようとする課題】

本発明はこのような従来技術の問題点に鑑みてなされたものであって、その目的とするところは、細胞親和性、特に基材内部への細胞侵入を容易にし、重層化や織り編み等の技術的に困難な工程を伴うことなく、厚みある織布や編み布に近い構造を有する医療用の生分解性基材を提供することにある。

[0012]

【課題を解決するための手段】

本発明の生分解性基材は、生分解性不織布が、生分解性糸状物によって縫製されたことを特徴としている。

[0013]

また、本発明の生分解性基材は、生分解性不織布と生分解性膜状物が重ね合わされ、生分解性糸状物によって両者が縫製されたことを特徴としており、この生分解性基材においては、前記生分解性膜状物として、フィルム状又はスポンジ状のものを用いるのが好ましい。

[0014]

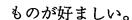
本発明においては、前記生分解性不織布として、例えば、生分解性糸状物を複数本平行に配列されてなる第1の層と第2の層が、第1の層と第2の層との糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着している積層体を含むものを用いることができる。

[0015]

また、第1の層又は第2の層の上に、さらに生分解性糸状物が複数本平行に配列された第3の層が、該第3の層の糸状物の配列方向と該第3の層と接する層の糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着している積層体を含む生分解性不織布を用いることもできる。

[0016]

これらの場合において、前記第1の層の糸状物の配列方向と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度及び/又は前記第3の層の糸状物の配列方向と該第3の層と接する層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が、約20°以下である



[0017]

また、前記第1の層の糸状物の配列方向と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす 鋭角の角度及び/又は前記第3の層の糸状物の配列方向と該第3の層と接する層 の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が、約70°~90°であるものが好まし い。

[0018]

さらに、前記生分解性不織布として、糸状物を配列されてなる層が複数積層された前記積層体を複数含み、積層体同士が接する部分において互いに接する層の糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層体が積層し、相互に接着しているものを用いることもできる。

[0019]

これらの生分解性不織布においては、各層において配列された各糸状物がなす 鋭角の角度が、約 $0\sim5$ °のものが好ましく、また、各層において配列された糸 状物の間隔が約 $0\sim4$ 0 mmであるものがより望ましい。

[0020]

本発明においては、縫製を点状にすることもできる。また、縫製の間隔は約0.1mm~100mmとするのがよい。

[0021]

さらに、本発明においては、生分解性不織布の表面及び/又は生分解性糸状物の表面が生分解性物質でコーティングされたものを用いるのが好都合である。当該生分解性物質には、例えば、コラーゲン、ゼラチン、PLA、PLA誘導体、PGA及びPGA誘導体並びにPLA、PLA誘導体、PGA、PGA誘導体のうち何れか2種以上による共重合体からなる群から選ばれた何れか1種以上からなることを特徴としている。

[0022]

また、本発明において用いられる生分解性不織布及び/又は生分解性糸状物は、コラーゲン、ゼラチン、PLA、PLA誘導体、PGA及びPGA誘導体並びにPLA、PLA誘導体、PGA、PGA誘導体のうち何れか2種以上による共



重合体からなる群から選ばれた何れか1種以上からなるものが好適である。

[0023]

本発明の組織再生用補綴材は、生体組織の欠損部に補填される組織再生用補綴 材であって、上記本発明の生分解性基材からなることを特徴としている。

[0024]

また、本発明の培養組織は、上記本発明の生分解性基材に生体組織細胞が生着されたことを特徴としている。

[0025]

【発明の実施の形態】

本発明の生分解性基材は、生分解性不織布からなり、該生分解性不織布が生分 解性糸状物によって縫製されたことを特徴としている。本発明における生分解性 とは、人や動物の生体内に置いた場合に人や動物組織と融合しあるいは生体内で 分解して消失しうることを意味するものであって、生体に適合可能なものが用い られる。本発明で用いられる生分解性不織布や生分解性糸状物として、例えばコ ラーゲン、ゼラチン等の生体由来材料からなるもの、あるいはPLA(ポリ乳酸)、PLA誘導体、PGA(ポリグリコール酸)、PGA誘導体並びにPLA、 PLA誘導体、PGA、PGA誘導体のうち何れか2種以上による共重合体等の 生分解性合成材料からなるものが挙げられる。中でも、細胞親和性、生体適合性 の点からコラーゲンが好適である。更に、可溶化処理と同時にコラーゲンの抗原 決定基であるテロペプタイドの除去処理が施されているアテロコラーゲンが最適 である。また、コラーゲンの由来については、特に限定されないが、一般的には ウシ、ブタ、鳥類、魚類、ウサギ、ヒツジ、ネズミ、人等が挙げられる。コラー ゲンはこれらの動物種の皮膚、腱、骨、軟骨、臓器等から公知の各種抽出方法を 用いることにより得られる。また、コラーゲンのタイプは、I型、II型、III型 などの分類可能なタイプのうちいずれかに限定されるものではないが、取り扱い 上の観点から、I型が特に好適である。

[0026]

本発明に用いられる生分解性不織布は、従来から公知である種々の不織布が用いられ、上記特許文献1や特許文献2に記載された不織布が例示される。また、



次に述べるように、生分解性のある糸状物が複数本平行に配列されてなる第1の層と第2の層が積層された積層体構造を含む不織布が特に好適に用いられる。

[0027]

ここにおいて生分解性のある糸状物が複数本平行に配列された層とは、複数本の糸状物が同一平面状に略均等な間隔をあけて直線的に配置された層であり、同じ層において配列された糸状物のなす角度は約 $0\sim5$ °であり、好ましくは約0°である。つまり、本発明において平行とはこの角度の範囲を意味し、厳密な意味での平行を言うものではない。また、同一層での糸状物の間隔は、通常、約 $0\sim40\,\mathrm{mm}$ である。

[0028]

また、積層とは、第1の層の糸状物の配列方向と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向が角度をなして重ね合わされ相互に接着していることを示し、第1の層に配列された糸状物と第2の層に配列された糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が0°ではないことを示す。また、第1の層と第2の層が積層するとは、第1の層と第2の層が互いの面で接触している状態である。

[0029]

本発明にて好適に用いられる生分解性不織布は、少なくともこのような2層からなる積層体を含むものであって、同様の生分解性糸状物が複数本平行に配列された第3の層が、第1の層又は第2の層の糸状物の配列方向と第3の層の糸状物の配列方向とが角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着された3層の積層体を含む生分解性不織布であってもよい。さらに、上記第1の層と第2の層からなる積層体の両面に、同様の生分解性糸状物が複数本平行に配列された層が同様に積層された4層からなる積層体、また、さらに糸状物が平行に配列された層が同様に積層された5層以上の層からなる積層体を含むようにしてもよい。このように、当該不織布は、互いに接する層における糸状物の配列方向が角度をなして2層以上積層された積層体を含むものである。なお、本発明において、層が互いに接するとは、糸状物が配列された層が互いの面で接触している状態を意味し、互いに接する層とは面で接触した状態で重ね合わせられた上下2つの層を意味する。また



、第3の層として積層される層における糸状物同士がなす角度や糸状物の間隔は 、上記範囲内のものが好ましい。

[0030]

これらの不織布においては、第1の層と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭 角の角度が 0° でなければよいが、好ましくは 20° 以下、望ましくは 10° 以 下である。また、生分解性糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすのは、互いに接する層 の配列方向であって、接していない層同士の糸状物配列方向は必ずしも角度をな す必要がなく、なす角度が0°であってもよい。例えば、3層からなる積層体に おいて第3の層が第2の層の上に積層された場合、第1の層と第2の層、並びに 、第2の層と第3の層の糸状物の配列方向は角度をなす必要があるが、第1の層 と第3の層の糸状物の配列方向は、角度をなしていてもよく、そのなす角度が0 。 であってもよい。また、第3の層と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす角度も 、好ましくは約20°以下、望ましくは10°以下である。なお、第1の層と第 3の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす角度が0°になる場合とは、第1の層の糸状物 の配列方向に対して第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が20°であ れば、第3の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度は第2の層の糸状物の配列 方向に対して一20°となる場合である。もちろん、第3の層の糸状物の配列方 向が、第2の層の糸状物の配列方向に対してさらに20°、つまり、第1の層の 糸状物の配列方向に対して40°の鋭角となっても何ら差し支えない。

[0031]

また、本発明の不織布にあっては、第1の層と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が、好ましくは約70°~90°、望ましくは約80°~90°であってもよい。この場合にも、生分解性糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすのは、互いに接する層の配列方向であって、接していない層同士の糸状物配列方向は必ずしも角度をなす必要がなく、なす角度が0°であってもよい。さらに、第3の層を積層する場合にも、当該第3の層と接する層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が好ましくは約70°~90°、望ましくは80°~90°である。この範囲の角度で第1の層、第2の層、第3の層と積層すれば、各層において平行に配列された糸状物が直交に近い状態で積層された不織布が得られる。





上記3層以上の複数の層からなる積層体としては、積層される糸状物の配列方向がなす角度が一定に保たれた積層体であってもよく、糸状物の配列方向のなす角度がランダムな積層体であってもよい。前者としては、例えば、第2の層の上に積み重ねられた第3の層の糸状物と第1の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が0°であって、いわば第1の層と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向のなす鋭角の角度が20°以下の一定の角度で第1の層と第2の層が交互に積層された積層体が挙げられる。また、後者としては、例えば、互いに接する層の糸状物の配列方向のなす角度が20°以下の範囲で変化しながら、第1の層、第2の層、第3の層・・・と順次ランダムに積層された積層体が挙げられる。

[0033]

さらに、本発明において用いられる不織布は、このような複数の層からなる積層体を複数積み重ねられることによって形成された積層体を含むものであってもよい。例えば、上記第3の層が、第1の層及び第2の層が交互に積層した積層体とは別の第2の積層体を形成する場合である。この場合には、積層体同士が接する部分において互いに接する層の糸状物の配列方向は角度をなしており、上記第3の層が第2の積層体を形成する場合であれば、第1の積層体を形成する最上層である第2の層と第2の積層体を形成する最下層である第3の層の糸状物の配列方向が角度をなしている。また、この第2の積層体は、複数の第3の層が積層した積層体であって、第1の積層体と同様に、生分解性糸状物を複数本平行に配列されてなる第1の層と第2の層が、第1の層と第2の層との糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着しているものや、さらに3層以上の層が積層し、相互に接着しているものである。

[0034]

この複数の積層体が積層された不織布では、積層体同士が接する部分において 互いに接する層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度が 0° 以外であればよいが 、好ましくは $70^\circ\sim 90^\circ$ 、望ましくは $80^\circ\sim 90^\circ$ である。例えば、糸状 物の配列方向のなす鋭角の角度が 20° 以下で積層された積層体をその角度が 70° 以上で積層すれば、不織布を構成する糸状物が縦横に配列された不織布が得



られる。また、 20° 以下の角度で積層すれば、上記第1の層、第2の層が交互により多く積層されたのと同じ効果を得ることができる。3つ以上の積層体を積み重ねる場合、積層体同士が接する部分におけるその角度は一定に保たれていてもよく、ランダムであってもよい。前者として、例えば、その鋭角の角度が約70° \sim 90°の一定角度で、第1の積層体と第2の積層体が交互に積み重ねられた積層体が挙げられる。

[0035]

これらにおいては、互いに接する層の糸状物同士がその接触部で接着されることによって、不織布が形成される。例えば、生分解性糸状物が、後述する湿式紡糸法において生成された乾燥前(湿潤状態にある)の糸状物である場合は、積層後、乾燥処理を施すことによって、接着がなされる。生分解性糸状物が、紡糸後に乾燥、架橋処理等を施した糸状物である場合は、積層後、生分解性物質、例えば、生分解性ポリマーを不織布上に噴霧若しくは含浸し、乾燥処理を施すことによって接着がなされる。

[0036]

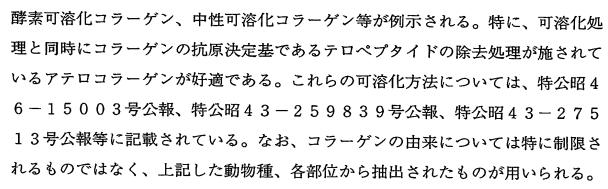
このような積層体からなる不織布に用いられる糸状物は、通常の糸のように柔軟性を有する巻き取り可能なものであれば特に制限されるものではない。確かに強度的に強いものほど好ましいが、上記特表平9-510639号公報に示されたように、織機や編み機にかけることができる程の強度は必要としない。すなわち、以下に述べるように、板状部材に巻き取ることができればよいものである。

[0037]

このような糸状物として、例えば、可溶化されたコラーゲンを紡糸原液として 紡糸されたコラーゲン糸状物が挙げられる。可溶化されたコラーゲン溶液を紡糸 原液として紡糸されるとは、コラーゲン溶液を原料として湿式紡糸等の種々公知 の紡糸方法(例えば上記特許文献 $3 \sim 5$ や特開平 6 - 2 2 8 5 0 5 号公報、特開 平 6 - 2 2 8 5 0 6 号公報など)により紡糸されることである。

[0038]

また、可溶化されたコラーゲンとは、溶媒に溶解できるよう処理が施されたコラーゲンであって、例えば、酸可溶化コラーゲン、アルカリ可溶化コラーゲン、



[0039]

可溶化されたコラーゲン溶液の溶媒としてはコラーゲンを可溶化できるものであれば特に限定されない。代表的なものとしては塩酸、酢酸、硝酸等の希酸溶液や、エタノール、メタノール、アセトン等の親水性有機溶媒と水との混合液、水などが挙げられる。これらは単独又は2種以上任意の割合で混合して用いてもよい。これらのうち好ましいのは水である。

[0040]

また、コラーゲン溶液のコラーゲン濃度は、紡糸可能な濃度であれば特に限定されないが、好ましくは、約 $4\sim1$ 0重量%であり、さらに好ましくは、約 $5\sim7$ 重量%である。

[0041]

コラーゲン糸状物の径は特に限定されないが、約 $5\,\mu\,m\sim1.5\,mm$ 程度の外形を有するものが好適で、更に約 $1\,0\sim2\,0\,0\,\mu\,m$ 程度の外径を有するものが最適である。

[0042]

コラーゲン糸状物が湿式紡糸法により紡糸される場合、不織布に用いられるコラーゲン糸状物は、湿式紡糸法により生成された乾燥前 (湿潤状態にある) の糸状物であっても、紡糸後に乾燥、架橋処理等を施した糸状物であってもよい。

[0043]

また、当該コラーゲン糸状物を作製するための湿式紡糸法として、親水性有機 溶媒を使用する方法、架橋剤を使用する方法など様々な方法が挙げられる。中で も特に親水性有機溶媒を用いて紡糸されたコラーゲン糸状物が好適に用いられる



親水性有機溶媒を用いて湿式紡糸を行う場合、通常、コラーゲン溶液をノズルから連続的に親水性有機溶媒等の脱溶媒剤の充填された浴槽中に吐出し、脱水及び凝固させることによりコラーゲン糸状物が得られる。用いる親水性有機溶媒としては、例えば、エタノール、メタノール、イソプロパノールなどの炭素数1~6のアルコール類、アセトン、メチルエチルケトンなどのケトン類等が挙げられる。これらは単独又は2種以上を任意の割合で混合して用いてもよい。このうち最も好ましい溶媒はエタノールである。親水性有機溶媒の含水率は、通常約50容量%以下であり、好ましくは約30容量%以下である。親水性有機溶媒を用いたコラーゲン溶液の紡糸(脱水・凝固)工程は通常、室温乃至42℃程度で行われ、一連の脱水及び凝固による処理時間は約4~5秒から5時間である。

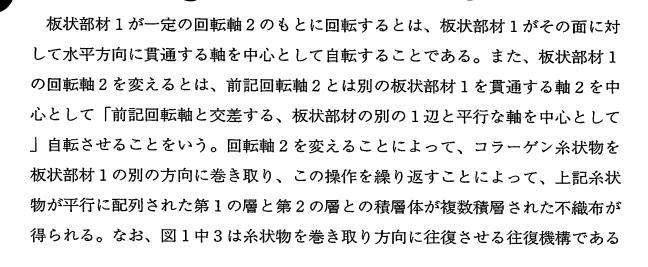
[0045]

上述の不織布の製造方法について例示すれば図1に示すとおりである。この方法では、板状部材1を一定の回転軸2のもとに回転させて、上記で得たコラーゲン糸状物を平行に巻き取り、糸状物が複数本平行に配列された層を複数積層して第1の積層体を形成させ、次いで第1の積層体と接する部分において、互いに接する層の糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすようにさらにコラーゲン糸状物を平行に巻き取り、第2の積層体を形成させている。なお、図示例では、前記板状部材1の回転軸2を変えて第2の積層体を形成させている。

[0046]

板状部材1は、それ自体が回転等することによって、コラーゲン糸状物を巻き取ることができる部材である。その材質は、コラーゲン糸状物と癒着が生じず、巻き取り状態を維持できる材質であれば特に限定されないが、好ましくは、金属、樹脂等であり、さらに好ましくはステンレス、ポリフッ化エチレン系樹脂等である。板状部材1の形状は、少なくとも2方向にコラーゲン糸状物を巻き取ることが可能な形状であれば特に限定されないが、少なくとも3つの辺を有する板状若しくは枠状であることが好ましく、さらに好ましくは略正方形の板状若しくは枠状である。

[0047]

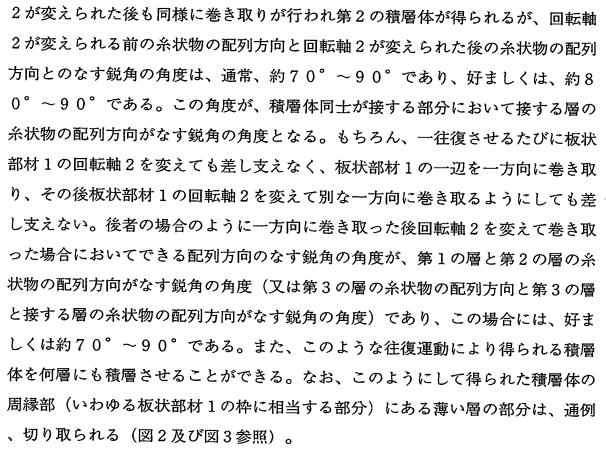


[0048]

また、板状部材1を回転させる駆動方法は、特に限定されないが、機械的な一定の駆動力によってなされることが好ましい。また、板状部材1の回転軸2を変える操作は、手動で方向転換させてもよく、自動的に回転軸2を変える装置等を用いて行ってもよい。工業的にコラーゲン不織布を製造する場合は、機械的に自動で回転軸2を変える装置を用いることが好ましい。

[0049]

通常、板状部材1にコラーゲン糸状物を一定の巻き取り幅で巻き取る場合、板状部材1の一辺を複数回往復させるように巻き取った後に、板状部材1の回転軸2が変えられる。つまり、板状部材1の一辺を一方向に巻き取ることにより一の層(第1の層)が形成され、板状部材1の設一辺を逆方向に巻き取ることにより他の一の層(第2の層)が形成される。こうして、板状部材1の一辺を往復させて巻き取れば、第1の層と第2の層が積層された積層体が得られる。従って、複数回往復させると、第1の層と第2の層がそれぞれその回数分だけ積層された積層体(第1の積層体)が得られる。糸状物を往復して巻き取る際の、行きと帰りの糸状物の配列方向のなす鋭角の角度は、通常、20°以下、好ましくは約10の糸状物の配列方向のなす鋭角の角度は、通常、20°以下、好ましくは約10の角度(又は第3の層の糸状物の配列方向と第2の層の糸状物の配列方向がなす鋭角の角度)となる。そして、この角度は、板状部材1の大きさと板状部材1の回転数及び往復機構3の往復速度によって調節される。また、回転軸

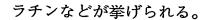


[0050]

上記方法で得られるコラーゲン不織布に、必要によりさらに種々公知の物理的 又は化学的架橋処理を施してもよい。架橋処理を施す段階は問わない。すなわち 各種架橋処理を施した糸状物で前記不織布を形成してもよいし、前記不織布を形 成した後、各種架橋処理を施してもよい。物理的架橋方法の例としてはγ線照射 、紫外線照射、電子線照射、プラズマ照射、熱脱水反応による架橋処理などが挙 げられ、化学的架橋方法の例としては、例えばジアルデヒド、ポリアルデヒドな どのアルデヒド類、エポキシ類、カルボジイミド類、イソシアネート類などとの 反応、タンニン処理、クロム処理などが挙げられる。これらのうち、物理的架橋 方法としては熱脱水架橋処理、化学的架橋方法としてはグルタルアルデヒドによ る架橋処理が好適である。

[0051]

また、上記方法で得られる生分解性不織布に対し、生分解性物質でコーティングを施してもよい。このコーティング物質には、コラーゲンやヒアルロン酸、ゼ



[0052]

このコーティング物質でコーティングを施す方法の一例としてバインダー処理 が挙げられる。バインダー処理とは、不織布に溶液状の材料を含浸させた後、適 当な乾燥方法で乾燥を行い、不織布中の糸状物同士の結合を補強する処理である 。このバインダー処理によりコラーゲン不織布は膜状に成形され、未処理の不織 布よりもはるかに物理的強度が向上し、従って縫合強度も格段に向上する。

[0053]

ただし、バインダー処理を行う際には、コラーゲン不織布に架橋処理が施されていない場合、不織布層自身が含浸させた溶媒に溶解してしまう場合があるため、前述の架橋方法等で、前もって架橋処理を施しておくのが望ましい。また、必要に応じてコーティング処理後に再び架橋処理を施してもよい。これら以外にも、コラーゲン不織布中の糸状物同士の接合を補強する種々の方法を適宜使用することができる。

[0054]

さらに、架橋処理を施した糸状物に予め上記コーティング物質でコーティング を施した後に不織布を得ることにしてもよい。

[0055]

また、上記不織布には、各層の糸状物を絡ませる処理を施してもよい。処理方法としては、例えば、ニードルパンチにより積層されたコラーゲン不織布の各層の糸同士を複雑且つランダムに絡み合せる処理方法が挙げられる。このような処理によって、フェルト状に成形されたコラーゲン不織布を得ることができる。フェルト状に成形されたコラーゲン不織布は、必要に応じてバインダー処理を施してもよい。

[0056]

また、コラーゲン以外にもゼラチンのような生分解性物質から生分解性の糸状物を得て作製された不織布を用いることもできるし、あるいは上記したような合成材料から生分解性の糸状物を得て作製された不織布を用いることもできる。これらの不織布の作製にも公知の方法が用いられ、例えばゼラチンを用いた例とし



て上記特許文献6に記載された方法が例示される。

[0057]

本発明の生分解性基材は、このようにして得られた不織布を生分解性の糸状物で縫製したものである。つまり、この糸状物(以下「縫製用糸状物」という。)は、織布で例えるならば2次元状の織布を縦方向に織り込む縦糸の機能を果たすものであり、不織布を構成する織り込まれていない糸状物や繊維がほぐれないように固定し不織布の強度を増す。図2に当該不織布に縫製が施されて生分解性基材が作製される様子を示す。

[0058]

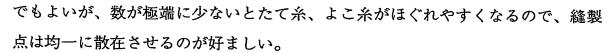
この生分解性の縫製用糸状物は、通常の糸のように柔軟性を有する巻き取り可能なものであれば特に制限されるものではない。例えば上記した生分解性不織布の作製に用いられる糸状物がそのまま用いられる。また、この縫製用糸状物は、単糸でも撚り糸でもよく、撚り糸である場合には撚りの糸本数は問わないが2~6本程度が好適である。また、撚り糸である場合には、撚りの過程で前述の架橋処理を施してもよい。

[0059]

縫製するとは、上記生分解性単糸又は撚り糸を用いて文字通り不織布を縫うことである。例えば、直線縫い、なみ縫い、半返し縫い、ブランケットステッチなど、服飾業界等で用いられているような縫製方法のいずれでも実施可能であり、好ましくは不織布を構成する糸や繊維がほぐれない程度に縫製される。縫製は用手的に行ってもミシン等の機械を使用してもよい。また、縫製箇所は上記目的を達成できるのであれば、その大きさ形状使用目的に応じた任意の位置でよいが、少なくとも生分解性不織布の周囲を縫製することが好ましく、望ましくは不織布の全面を均等に縫製するのがよい。また、不織布の全面に縫製を施す場合、縫製ラインを同一方向として縫製したり、縦横方向など縫製ラインをクロスして縫製を施す。また、好ましくは縫製ラインを約90°方向でクロスさせるのがよい。

[0060]

また、縫製は必ずしも連続的な縫製でなくてもよく、座布団のような点での縫製でも差し支えない。縫製点の数はいくつでもよく、例えば不織布の中央部だけ



[0061]

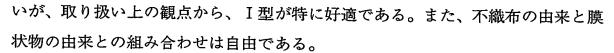
これら縫製や縫製点の間隔(ピッチ)についても特に制限はないが、約0.1 mm~100mmがよく、約1mm~10mm程度が好適である。ただし、膜状の不織布を縫製したり、後述する膜状物を生分解性不織布に重ね合わせて縫製する場合には、縫製のピッチや縫製点の間隔をあまり細かくすると膜状物に穿たれた縫い穴が多くなりすぎ、逆に強度が低下する場合があるので注意を要する。

[0062]

本発明では、上記の如く生分解性不織布を1枚だけ縫製するだけでなく、2枚、3枚と重ねて縫製してもよい。例えば、図3に示す如く生分解性不織布に別な生分解性の膜状物を重ね合わせて縫製してもよい。これによって、織布に近いあるいはそれ以上に厚みのある医療用基材を得ることができる。本発明による生分解性不織布の厚みは、特に制限されるものではなく、通例数百 μ m~数mm、大きな場合では十数mm以上である。また、用途によってもその厚みは異なり、例えば後述する細胞培養基材の場合には、実用上5mm程度までである。

[0063]

重ね合わされる生分解性膜状物は、前述の生分解性不織布や生分解性糸状物と同様コラーゲン、ゼラチン等の生体由来材料からなるもの、あるいはPLA(ポリ乳酸)、PLA誘導体、PGA(ポリグリコール酸)、PGA誘導体及びPLA、PLA誘導体、PGA、PGA誘導体のうち何れか2種以上による共重合体等の生分解性合成材料からなるものが挙げられる。中でも、細胞親和性、生体適合性の点からコラーゲンが好適である。更に、可溶化処理と同時にコラーゲンの抗原決定基であるテロペプタイドの除去処理が施されているアテロコラーゲンが最適である。また、コラーゲンの由来については、特に限定されないが、一般的にはウシ、ブタ、鳥類、魚類、ウサギ、ヒツジ、ネズミ、人等が挙げられる。コラーゲンはこれらの動物種の皮膚、腱、骨、軟骨、臓器等から公知の各種抽出方法を用いることにより得られるものである。また、コラーゲンのタイプは、I型、II型、III型などの分類可能なタイプのうちいずれかに限定されるものではな



[0064]

形状としてはシート状若しくはフィルム状物でも、あるいは多孔を有するスポンジ状物でもよく、特に限定されるものではない。また、生分解性不織布等であっても差し支えないが、特に好ましくは生分解性不織布に上記の如く生分解性物質でバインダー処理したものがよい。

[0065]

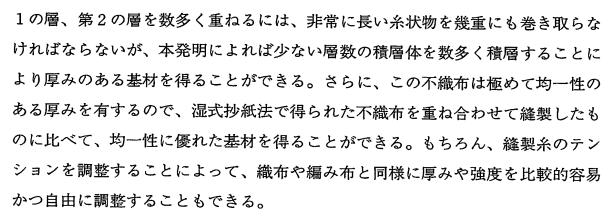
重ね合わせる膜状物の位置は特に限定されない。すなわち、生分解性不織布の上に重ねてもよく、下に重ねてもよい、また、生分解性不織布の間に重ねることもでき、積層枚数も制限がない。また、縫製糸のテンション及び不織布の積層数を調整することにより、空隙率のコントロールが可能である。

[0066]

このように本発明の生分解性基材は、生分解性不織布を生分解性糸状物で縫製したものであり、糸状物には織機や編み機に必要とされる強度を要することなく、織布と同様な性質、特に強度や厚みを有する生分解性基材を極めて簡単に得ることができる。また、不織布を単に糸状物を用いて縫っているだけであるので、技術的な困難性を伴わず、織機や編み機のような特別な機械も必要とすることなくミシンのような簡単な機械を用いるだけで作製できる。しかも、不織布を構成する糸状物や繊維は予め結合しているので織布に比べて切断した場合には糸がほぐれることが少なく、強度的に安定したものが簡単に製造できる。もちろん、不織布を縫製しただけであるので、細胞侵入性や物質透過性に影響を与えるものではなく、立体的に細胞を培養できる。

[0067]

特に、複数本の糸状物が平行に配列されてなる第1の層と第2の層が積層された積層体を含む不織布を使用した場合には、積層された糸状物が縫製糸によって固定されることになり、糸状物が平行に配列された第1の層、第2の層があたかもたて糸よこ糸をなすかの如く縫製され、不織布を構成する糸状物が解れずに済み、任意の形状にカットしても強度の低下を引き起こすことが少ない。また、第



[0068]

膜状物を重ね合わせる場合にも不織布と膜状物を接合するために特殊な方法を 要せず、しかも両者は生分解性の糸状物で縫い合わされているため容易に分離せ ず、品質的にも安定な基材を簡単な方法で作製できる。

[0069]

本発明の組織再生用補綴材はこのようにして得られた生分解性基材(縫製品)からなるものである。つまり、当該生分解性基材は、例えば組織工学分野・再生医療分野における、組織の再生を目的とした補填及び補綴材料として体内に移植される組織再生用補綴材(移植用基材)として用いることができる。すなわち、本発明による生分解性基材を体内又は体表面の組織欠損部に補填し、失われた生体組織の再生を促す。具体的には、例えば心膜、胸膜、脳硬膜、漿水膜等の膜状物として、外科手術の際に除去されたこれらの膜部位に直接適用できる。この生分解性基材は、生体組織を覆っている膜状物が再生するにつれ徐々に分解・吸収される。また、抜歯後の空孔や歯骨に開けられた空孔内に補綴材として充填すれば、歯肉組織の再生や歯骨の再生が終わるまでの間、空孔を塞いでおくことができる。その他、人工血管、ステント、人工神経チャンネル、人工気管、人工食道、人工尿管などの管状物、その他袋状物に加工して生体内に埋設しておくこともできる。この管状物を作製する方法としては、得られた生分解性基材を、コラーゲン溶液を接着剤として、ポリフッ化エチレン系繊維製のチューブ等に巻き付けてゆき、乾燥後、チューブを引き抜く方法が挙げられる。

[0070]

さらに、3次元構造物を作製するには、例えば厚みのある基材をそのまま裁断



加工したり、鋳型に得られた基材を封入した上で、鋳型の穴から生分解性ポリマー溶液を注ぎ込み、各種方法を用いて乾燥させる方法が挙げられる。

[0071]

また、本発明の培養組織は、上記本発明の生分解性基材に生体組織細胞が生着されたことを特徴としている。すなわち、本発明の生分解性基材は、接着性細胞等の各種細胞を体外で培養するための基材(細胞培養基材)としても利用できる。具体的には上記生分解性基材を一定形状に成形し、当該成形された培養用基材上で予め繊維芽細胞、軟骨細胞等の体組織を形成する細胞を常法に従って一定期間培養し、当該培養用基材の形状に細胞を増殖させて生体組織を形成した後、体内へ移植することもできる。ここで生体組織とは、生体外で人工的に組織細胞を培養させることが可能な組織を言い、心筋や血管、皮膚など培養ができる組織であれば全てに適用されるものである。例えば、心筋細胞を生分解性基材上で培養しておき、当該生分解性基材と共に移植したり、あるいは管状物に加工した上で血管内皮細胞や血管上皮細胞を培養した後に、当該生分解性基材と共に移植することができる。もちろん、移植後には基材は自然と分解、除去されるため、その後基材の除去手術が不要になる。

[0072]

さらに、各種成長因子、薬剤、ベクター等を含浸させ、ドラッグデリバリーシステム用担体、徐放性薬剤用担体、遺伝子治療用担体等として利用することもできる。

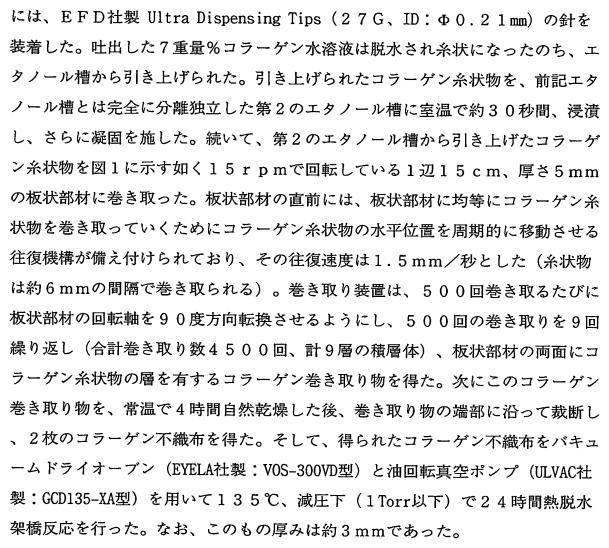
[0073]

【実施例】

次に、実施例を示し、本発明についてさらに詳細に説明する。

実施例1 コラーゲン不織布の作製

ブタ由来 I 型、III型コラーゲン粉末(日本ハム株式会社製、SOFDタイプ、Lot No. 0 1 0 2 2 2 6)を注射用蒸留水(大塚製薬社製)に溶解し、7重量%に調整した。そして、この7重量%コラーゲン水溶液をシリンジ(E F D 社製 Disposable Barrels/Pistons、5 5 mL)に充填し、シリンジに装着した針より該コラーゲン水溶液を空気圧によりエタノール槽中に吐出した。この際シリンジ



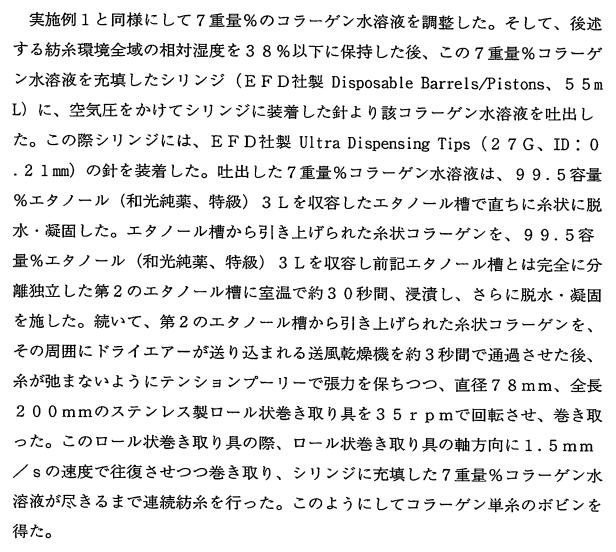
[0074]

実施例2 コラーゲン膜状物への2次加工

ブタ由来 I 型、III型混合コラーゲン粉末(日本ハム株式会社製、SOFDタイプ、Lot No.010226)を注射用蒸留水(大塚製薬社製)に溶解し、1重量%に調整した。この1重量%に調整したコラーゲン水溶液を、実施例1で得た熱脱水架橋反応後のコラーゲン不織布1枚に含浸させ、膜状に成型した後、常温で十分に自然乾燥した。その後、前記と同じバキュームドライオーブンを用いて135℃、減圧下(1Torr以下)で12時間熱脱水架橋反応を行い、膜状のコラーゲン不織布を得た。

[0075]

実施例3 コラーゲン単糸の製造



[0076]

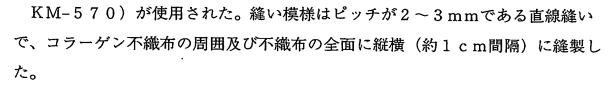
実施例4 コラーゲン単糸の熱脱水架橋反応処理

実施例3で製造されたコラーゲン単糸を、ステンレス製ロール状巻き取り具に 巻き取られたままの状態で前記と同じバキュームドライオーブンを用いて135 ℃、減圧下(1Torr以下)で24時間熱脱水架橋反応処理を行い、熱架橋処理が 施されたコラーゲン単糸のボビンを得た。

[0077]

実施例5 コラーゲン不織布の縫製

実施例1にて作製されたコラーゲン不織布を6枚重ねて、実施例3にて作製されたコラーゲン単糸を2本撚った撚り糸で縫製し、コラーゲンの糸構造を有する3次元的な生分解性基材を得た。縫製にはミシン(ジャガー株式会社製、Model



[0078]

実施例6 コラーゲン不織布とコラーゲン膜状物の縫製

実施例1にて作製されたコラーゲン不織布と、実施例2にて作製された膜状に加工されたコラーゲン不織布を重ねて、実施例4にて作製された熱架橋処理が施されたコラーゲン単糸を2本撚った撚り糸で縫製し、コラーゲンの糸構造を有する3次元的な生分解性基材を得た。縫製方法は実施例5と同様とした。

[0079]

実験例1 繊維芽細胞培養実験

実施例 5 にて得られたコラーゲン製基材上で、ヒト繊維芽細胞の培養を行った。培養にはMedium 106S(基礎培地) 5 0 0 mL及びLSGS(Low Serum Growthfactor Supplement) 1 0 mL(共にCascade Biologics社製)を混合した混合培地を用いた。

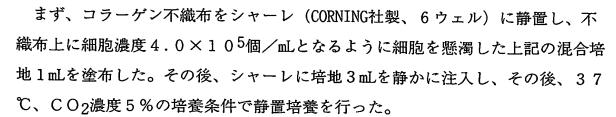
まず、コラーゲン不織布をシャーレ(CORNING社製、6ウェル)に静置し、基材上に細胞濃度 4.0×10^5 個/mLとなるように細胞を懸濁した上記の混合培地 1 mLを塗布した。その後、シャーレに培地 3 mLを静かに注入し、その後、3.7 \mathbb{C} 、 \mathbb{C} \mathbb{C}

培養開始14日後における細胞の基材生着及び増殖の様子を図4に示す。その結果、縦横に配列されたコラーゲン糸状物に、細胞の良好な生着が確認できた。また、基材を構成するコラーゲン糸状物に沿って良好に増殖している様子が確認できた。このことから本発明によるコラーゲン製3次元培養基材としての機能を十分に有することが判明した。

[0080]

実験例2 軟骨細胞培養実験

実施例5にて得られたコラーゲン製基材上で、ヒト軟骨細胞の培養を行った。 培養には、Basal Medium 500mL及びGrowth Supplement 10mL (共にCELL A PPLICATIONS 社製)を混合した混合培地を用いた。



培養開始14日後における細胞の基材生着及び増殖の様子を図5に示す。その結果、縦横に積層するコラーゲン糸状物に細胞が良好に生着し、また、基材を構成するコラーゲン糸状物に沿って良好に増殖している様子が確認できた。このことから本発明によるコラーゲン製3次元培養基材が培養基材としての機能を十分に有することが確認できた。

[0081]

【発明の効果】

本発明の生分解性基材は、生分解性不織布が、生分解性糸状物によって縫製されているので、ミシンなどの簡易な装置によって、薄くて強度の弱い不織布から、細胞親和性に優れ、かつ厚みや強度のあるものを容易に得られる。また、不織布に用いられる生分解性糸状物や縫製用の生分解性糸状物は、織機や編み機に用いることができる程の強度を必要とせず、巻き取り可能な程度の強度のもので差し支えない。このため、従来からある公知の方法で得られる生分解性糸状物をそのまま用いることができる。特に、コラーゲン糸のように生分解性の糸状物にあっては、高い強度のものを得にくいが、このようなコラーゲン糸でも十分に織布や編み布と近似した性質、例えば強度や厚みを有する生分解性の基材を得ることができる。しかも、裁断した場合には、織布のようにたて糸、よこ糸がほぐれる心配も少なく、自由な形状に成形加工できる。また、厚みや強度を比較的自由に調整できるので、3次元的に細胞培養可能な基材をたやすくしかも安価に得ることができる。

[0082]

また、本発明では、生分解性不織布とフィルム状、スポンジ状などの生分解性 膜状物が重ね合わされ、生分解性糸によって生分解性不織布と生分解性膜状物が 縫製されているので、煩雑な接合方法を採用せずに、不織布と膜状物の積層物を 得ることができる。



本発明は、例えば、生分解性糸状物を複数本平行に配列されてなる第1の層と第2の層が、第1の層と第2の層との糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着された積層体を含む生分解性不織布や前記第1の層と第2の層の上に、さらに生分解性糸状物が複数本平行に配列された第3の層が、当該第3の層の糸状物の配列方向と該第3の層と接する層の糸状物の配列方向とが角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着している積層体を含む生分解性不織布が望ましく用いられる。このような不織布に適用することにより、上記本発明のメリットを最大限に活かすことができる。

[0084]

これらの生分解性基材は、生体組織の欠損部に補填される組織再生用補綴材として、また、該生分解性基材に生体組織細胞を生着させることによって生体内にそのまま移植可能な培養組織を作製することができる。このように、本発明は再生医療に対して大いに貢献できるものである。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】

本発明において用いられる生分解性不織布の製造方法の一例を示す説明図である。

【図2】

本発明の一実施形態である生分解性基材の製造方法を示す説明図である。

【図3】

本発明の別な実施形態である生分解性基材の製造方法を示す説明図である。

【図4】

培養により繊維芽細胞が本発明の生分解性基材に生着した状態を示す写真である。

【図5】

培養によりヒト軟骨細胞が本発明の生分解性基材に生着した状態を示す写真で ある。

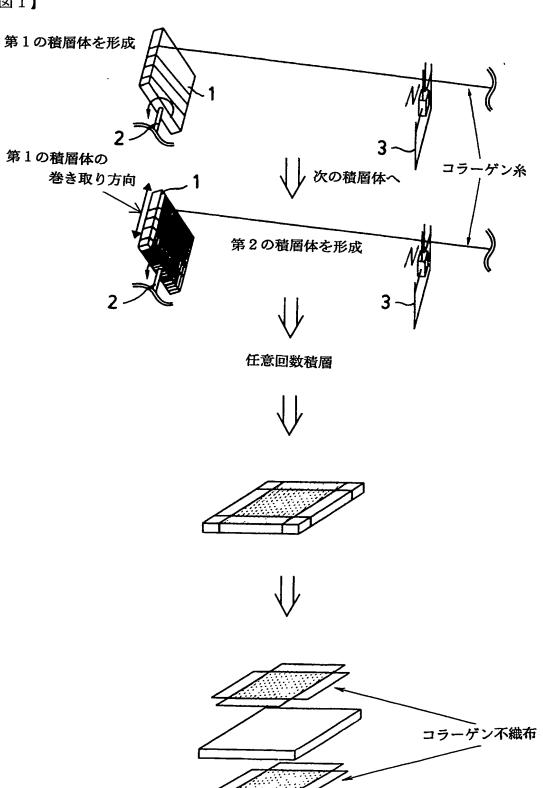
【符号の説明】

- 1 板状部材
- 2 回転軸

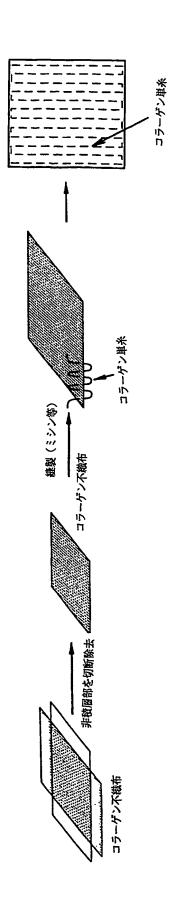


図面

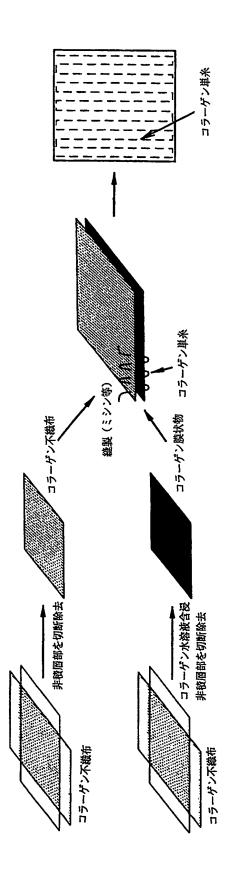
【図1】















【図5】





【書類名】

要約書

【要約】

【課題】 細胞親和性、特に基材内部への細胞侵入を容易にし、重層化や織り編み等の技術的に困難な工程を伴うことなく、厚みある織布に近い構造を有する医療用の生分解性基材を提供する。

【解決手段】 生分解性の不織布を生分解性の糸状物でもって縫製し、本発明の生分解性基材を得る。不織布として、例えばコラーゲン糸状物が複数本平行に配列されてなる第1の層と第2の層を、第1の層と第2の層との糸状物の配列方向が角度をなすように積層し、相互に接着したものを用い、コラーゲン糸状物でもって例えばなみ縫いする。また、当該不織布にコラーゲンやゼラチンのような生分解性物質でバインダー処理した膜状物を重ね合わせて縫製してもよい。この生分解性基材は、例えば組織再生用の補綴材として、あるいは細胞培養基材として用いることができる。

【選択図】 図2



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